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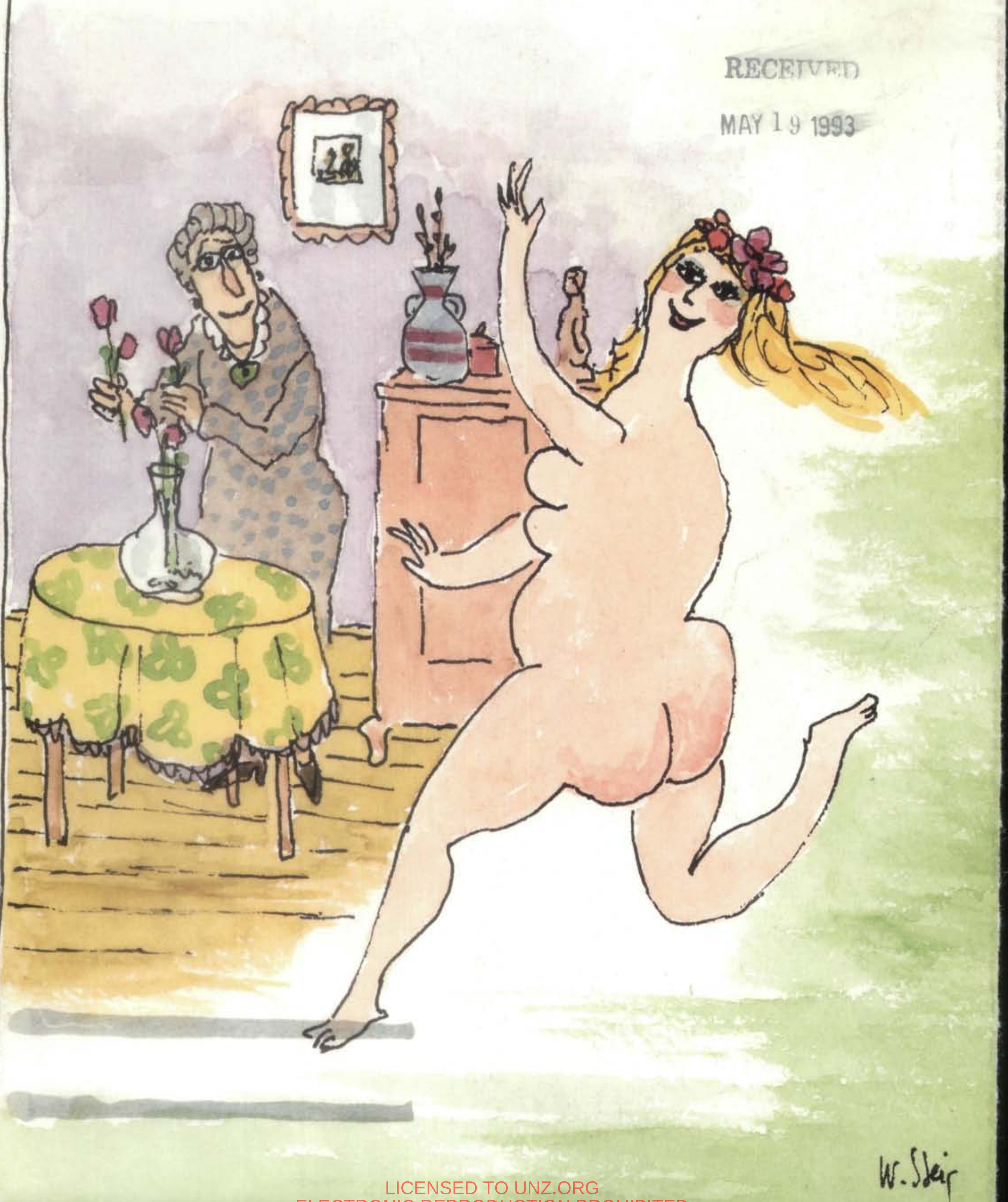

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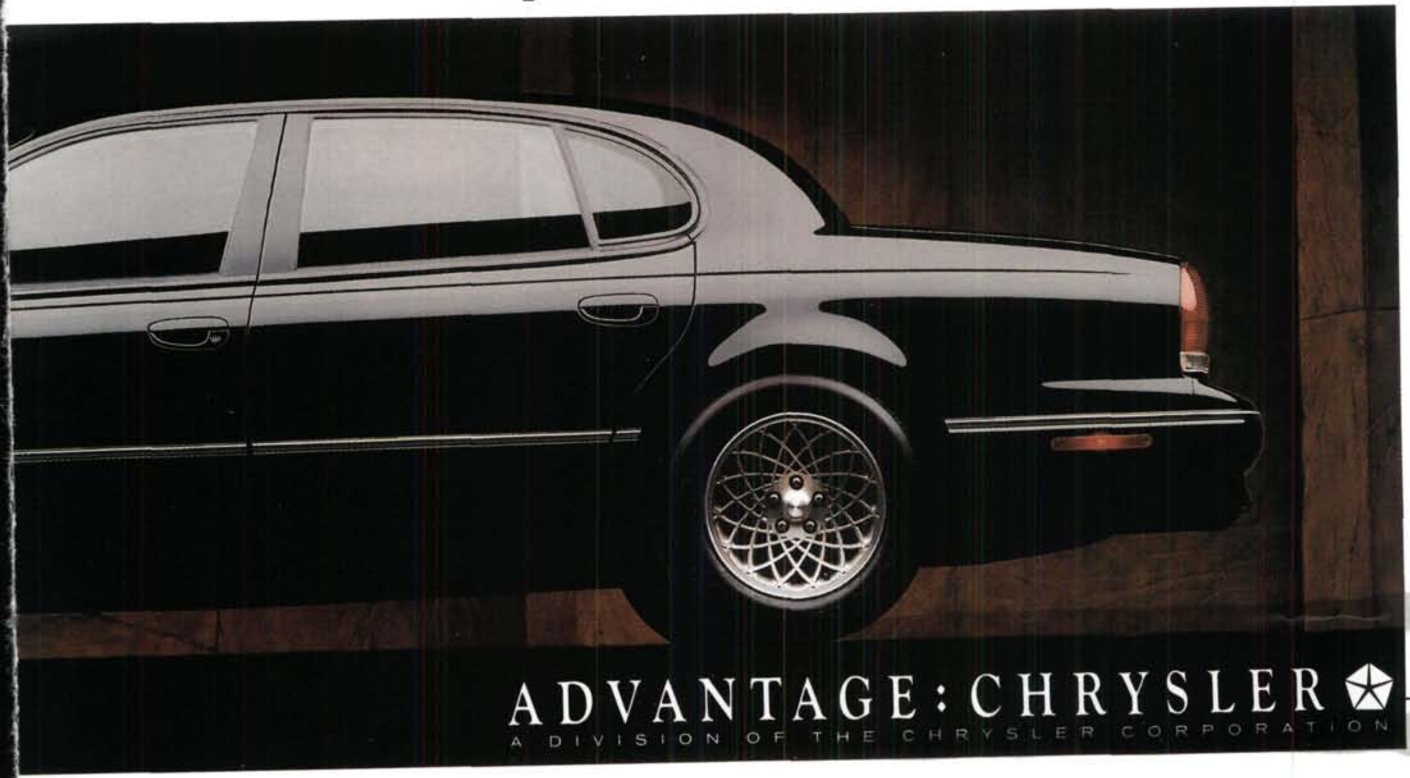

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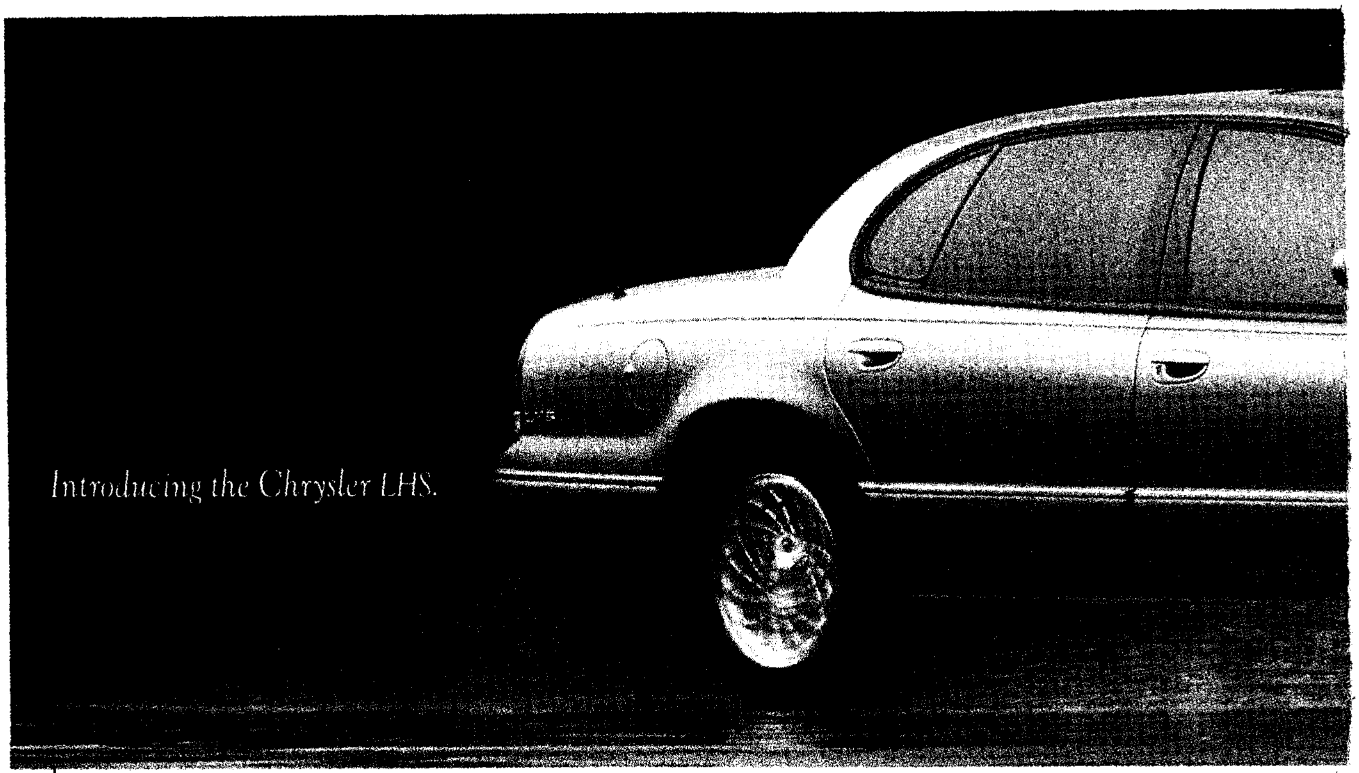

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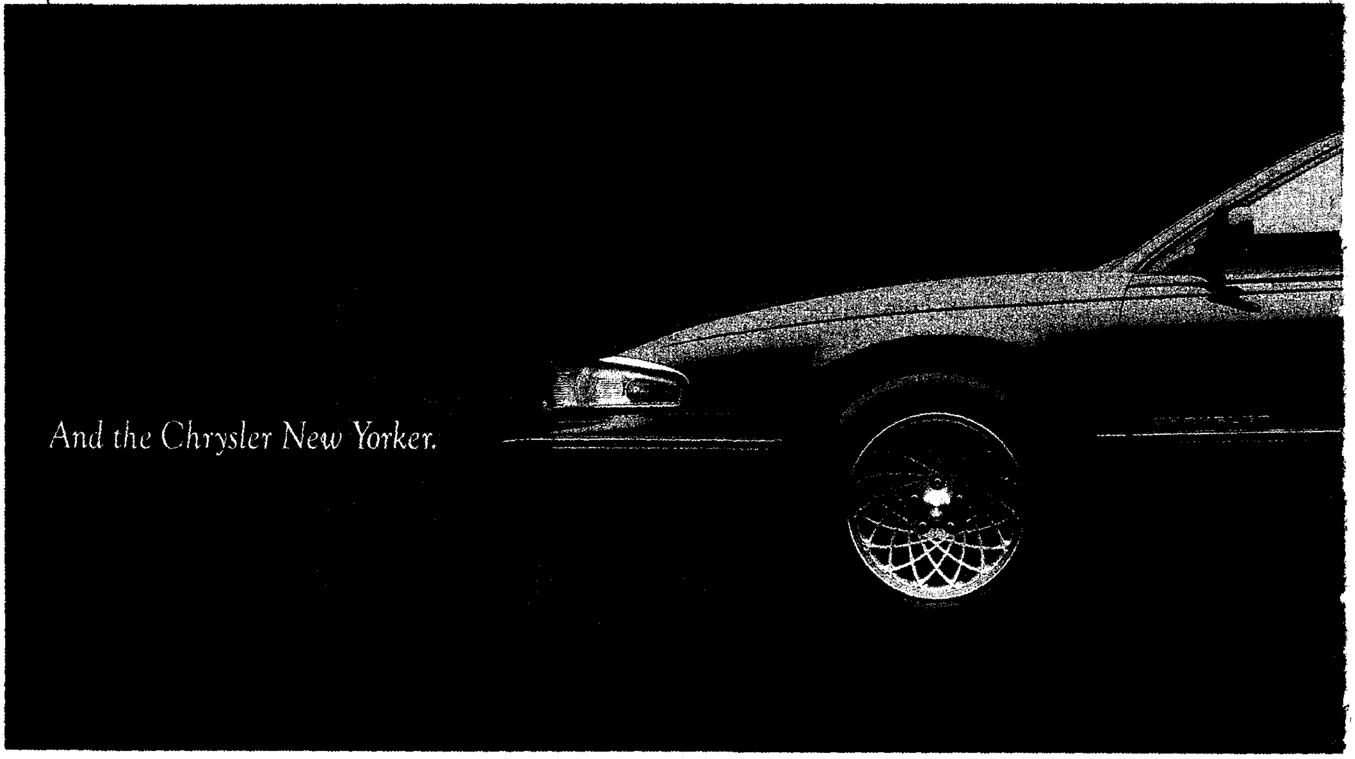

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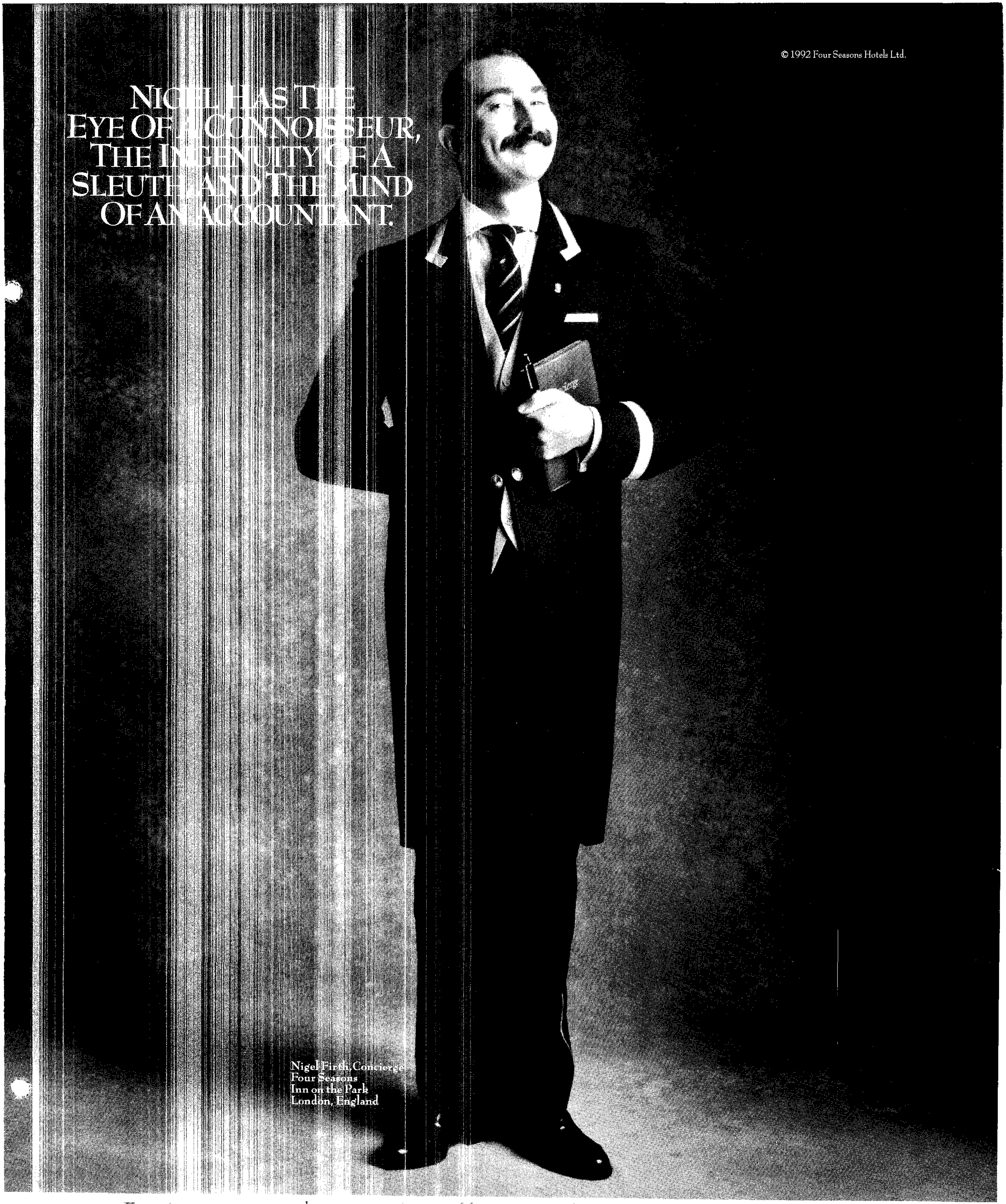
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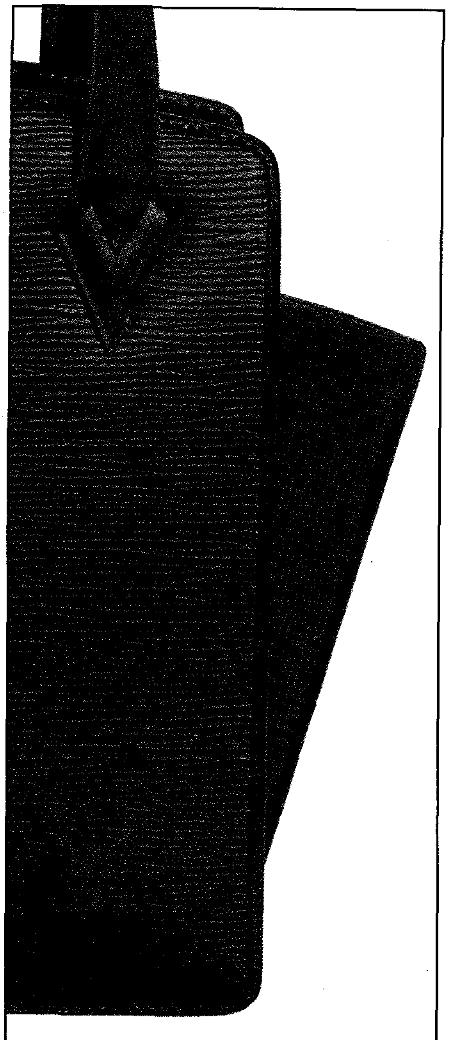

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COMMENT

TWO MURDERS

THE first of New York's two historic assassinations of important newspaper editors took place fifty years ago, on January 11, 1943, when Carlo Tresca, having lunched with his friend John Dos Passos, returned to his editorial offices at *Il Martello* (The Hammer), put in several hours of work, stepped out to the corner of Fifth Avenue and Fifteenth Street, and was shot dead. The murderer was probably a mobster named Carmine Galante, who went on to have a long and prosperous career in New York thuggery and the heroin trade. Yet it was never known who gave the order. Galante was what Colombians call a *sicario*, meaning a professional, and knew how to keep quiet. As for Tresca, he embodied the maxim: The greater the man, the vaster the crowd that wants to see him dead.

In a 1934 Profile in these pages, Max Eastman observed that Tresca, who was a labor agitator as well as a journalist, had a splendid ability to nurse a measly local dispute into a fine, big, tumultuous catastrophe approaching a national crisis. Many an irritated small-time employer or Mafia kingpin might have had reason, then, to dream of a world without Carlo Tresca. Another suspect was Mussolini. Tresca was Il Duce's loudest and liveliest opponent in the world of Italian America, and was famous for staging unpleasant incidents, often involving a baseball bat, every time American supporters of Mussolini tried to hold a peaceful Fascist rally on the streets of New York.

Or the Kremlin might have been responsible. Tresca's brand of hardboiled leftism was strictly libertarian and anti-Communist. In his last months, he worked hard to push the United States government into preventing a Communist takeover in postwar Italy. So Moscow had a motive. After fifty years, many another mystery of Tresca's era has been solved—the mysteries, say, of how the Polish Socialists Henryk Ehrlich and Victor Alter and the Catalan Marxist Andreu Nin met their deaths, which indeed turn out to have been arranged by the Kremlin. But Tresca's murder remains unsolved. And though there are people here and there who still remember who he was and recognize his importance (there was a meet-

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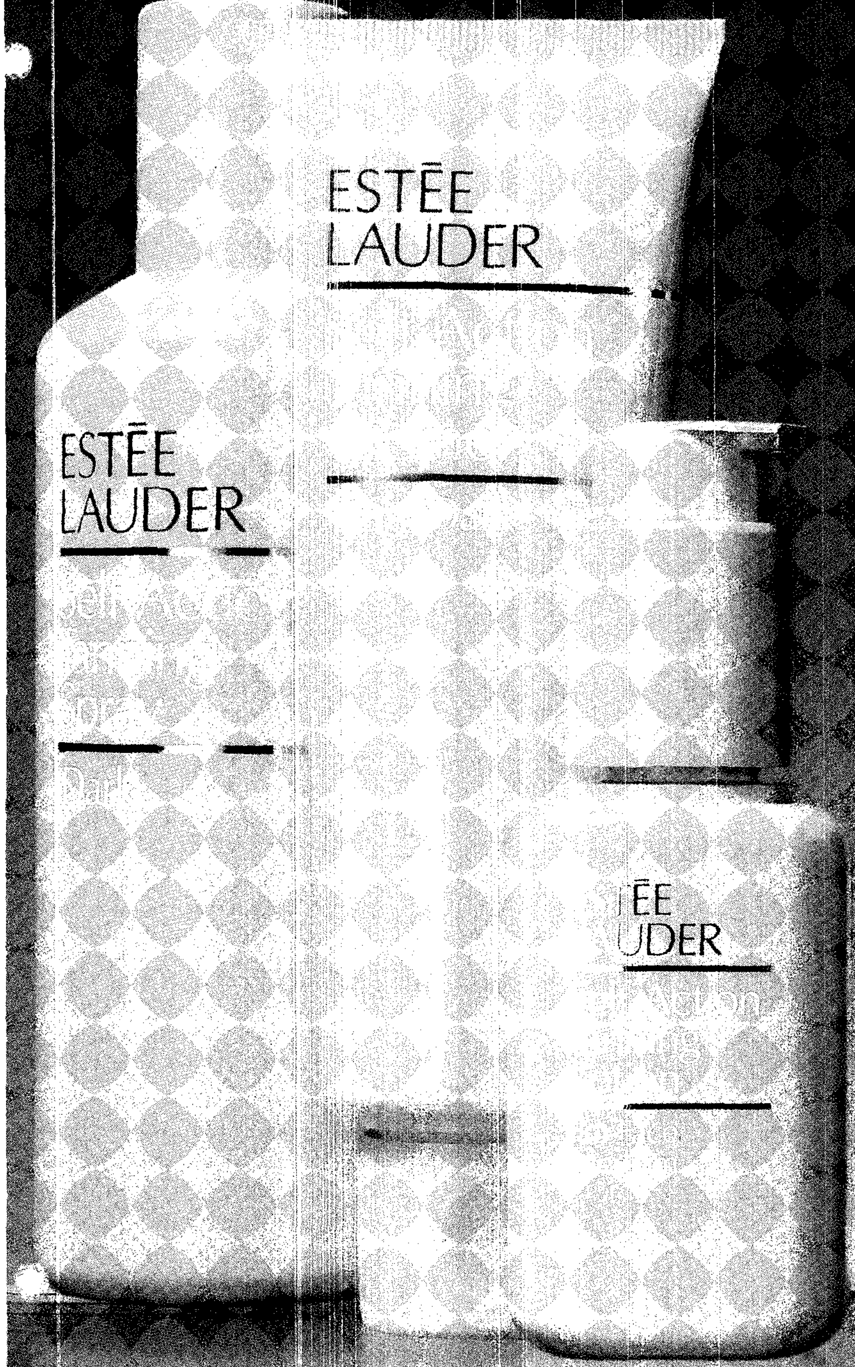

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ing of such people in New York just two months ago), it is easy to see him as nothing more than a marginal figure who wrote in a marginal language for poor workers long ago and suffered the consequences of an obscure immigrant quarrel.

The second historic murder of a New York newspaper editor was last year's killing of Manuel de Dios Unanue, assassinated on March 11, 1992, in a restaurant on Roosevelt Avenue in Queens. De Dios was for a while the editor of New York's *El Diario–La Prensa* and later became the publisher of sensational crime sheets called *Crimen* and *Cambio 21*. And until last week it seemed that in the matter of acquiring enemies Manuel de Dios was the Carlo Tresca of our time—and that never, never would we learn who ordered the killing. But now the Queens detectives and the Red Rum ("murder" spelled backward) squad made up of local and federal cops have arrested a seventeen-year-old *sicario* in Miami, along with a man who hired him, a man who hired the hirer, and so on up the ladder to a big-time lord of the Cali cocaine cartel in Colombia, José Santacruz Londoño, who up to now has not been arrested. And what an international flap is going to take place over the impending request (let us hope) for *his* extradition!

These spectacular arrests should reveal to us an old but invisible truth about American journalism. In this country, there is an Anglophonic fallacy concerning the centrality of the big English-language news organizations and the marginality of the foreign-language press. This fallacy would have been exploded fifty years ago by the Tresca case if only the murder had been solved. For even if Tresca's newspaper was in Italian, and his readers occupied a humble place in society, Tresca was one of America's pioneers of labor rights, and he became the first person to raise a really insistent cry against Fascism, and then he became one of the first public figures to urge active resistance to the Soviets in Europe. His *Martello* wasn't on the margins of American life; it was in the vanguard. Tresca led; the country followed. And the same contrast between appearance and reality is suddenly clear as day in the case of Manuel de Dios.

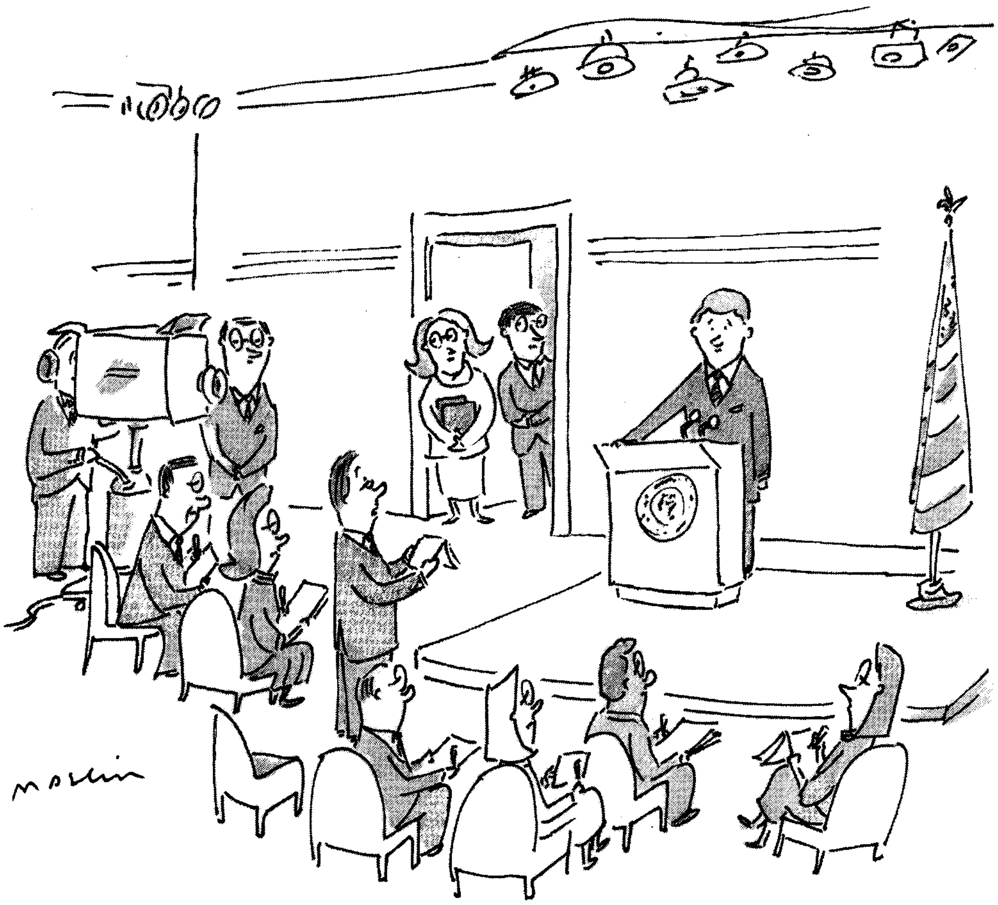
Yes, de Dios's news stories were in Spanish, and his book, which carried the brave title "Los Secretos del Cartel de Medellín," was never translated into English, and his journalism sometimes dipped below the lofty standards of newspapers that are infinitely better financed. But anyone can see that cocaine addiction is ripping the heart out of whole segments of our society, and that in the pages of those well-financed English-language papers no one writes a regular report on drug importation or on the ups and downs of the one major industry that is undoing American life. In New York in recent years, only Manuel de Dios did that. As Bill Berkeley wrote in the March-April issue of the *Columbia Journalism Review*, "de Dios was just about the only journalist in New York who covered the city's multibillion-dollar drug trade with any degree of detail or intimacy."

Last year, PEN, the writers' organization, held a protest meeting about de Dios. Mary Gordon—a remote kinswoman of Carlo Tresca on her Sicilian side, according to her family's lore—read a statement that had been faxed to New York. It was from the underground author of "The Satanic Verses."

"The murder of Manuel de Dios provides brutal proof, if proof were needed, that freedom of speech is no mere abstraction," said Salman Rushdie, through Gordon's vocal cords. "Writers and journalists, who insist upon this freedom, and see in it the world's best weapon against tyranny and corruption, know also that it is a freedom which must constantly be defended, or it will be lost. Those they write against—drug dealers, political tyrants, religious despots—also understand the power of free expression all too well, and go to terrible lengths to suppress it."

Rushdie went on, "I salute the courage of Manuel de Dios and mourn his loss. And I offer his family and friends the paradoxical and bitter consolation that his assassination demonstrates the effectiveness of his campaign. To be so hated and feared by those who are themselves fearsome and hateful is a victory: a joyless victory, because Manuel de Dios is dead, but a victory nevertheless."

The "effectiveness of his campaign"? Until last week's arrests, people scoffed at any such notion. How could someone writing in a foreign language for the newsstands of immigrant neighborhoods be effective? But Rushdie was right. De Dios instilled fear in the Cali cartel. His murder is the proof. Manuel de Dios was American journalism's vanguard. He led; we will have to follow. ♦



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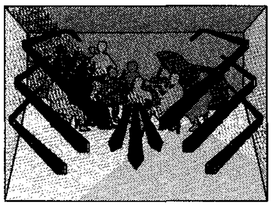

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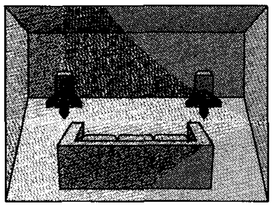

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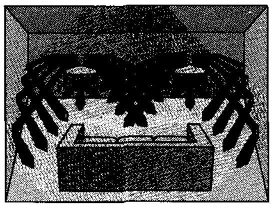

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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THE THEATRE

Page Turners

Jon Robin Baitz is one of the few contemporary dramatists whose work is as thrilling to read as it is to see performed, and so to pick up the volume of his plays recently published by the Theatre Communications Group is to afford oneself a few hours of pleasure. In "The Film Society," "The Substance of Fire," and "The End of the Day," the trio collected here, Mr. Baitz' reputation-making verbal dexterity shines forth, as do his moral seriousness and camp-inflected wit.

It's too bad, however, that "Three Hotels," the Baitz play currently running at Circle Rep, was not included in this volume, for the production leaves one with the feeling that the piece might actually be richer to read than to see. This is not to say that the Circle Rep evening is ill spent: the play, which consists of three monologues—two from an international businessman, one from his unhappy wife—has been well directed, by Joe Mantello (who is also currently one of the leads in "Angels in America"); well performed, by Ron Rifkin and Christine Lahti (whose role was just ceded to Debra Monk); and impeccably lit and designed, by Brian MacDevitt and Loy Arcenas. But it's no more than a finger exercise, and its technical merits would perhaps be even more apparent on the page than on the stage.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

Later Life—In A. R. Gurney's new play, a man and woman who haven't seen each other in thirty years meet up again. Previews through May 22. Opens May 23 at 7. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Marisol—A play by José Rivera, with Cordelia Gonzalez and Danitra Vance. Preview on May 19. Opens May 20 at 8. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Playland—A two-character play by Athol Fugard that premièred last summer at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg. Frankie R. Faison and Kevin Spacey make up the cast. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

She Loves Me—A revival of the 1963 musical by Joe Masteroff, Jerry Bock, and Sheldon Harnick. The cast features Jonathan Freeman, Boyd Gaines, Brad Kane, Judy Kuhn, Sally Mayes, Howard McGillin, Lee Wilkof, and Louis Zorich. In previews. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Totie—A musical based on the life of the comedienne Totie Fields. Book by Bobby Pearce and Nancy Timpanaro and score and lyrics by Robert Bendorff. In previews. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797.)

OPENED RECENTLY

And Baby Makes Seven—Paula Vogel's new play is about a lesbian couple (one of them is pregnant), the man who lives with them (he's the father of the baby), and three imaginary boys whom the women have invented. The playwright has devised a funny and moving debate about parenthood and make-believe and love, and the cast—Peter Frechette, Mary Mara, and Cherry Jones—makes all of the characters seem utterly real. Last year's "The Baltimore Waltz" was an allegorical trip; here Ms. Vogel successfully interweaves fantasy and reality. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200. Closes May 23.)

Angels in America: Millennium Approaches—The first half of Tony Kushner's epic work is set in 1985, at the height of the Reagan counter-revolution, and it maps the trickle-down effect of self-interest as Kushner's characters ruthlessly pursue their private and public destinies. The Pulitzer Prize-winning play is a saga about sexual politics, death, and decay. Not to be missed. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Back to Bacharach and David—A fizzy, perfectly pitched new musical revue devoted to the songs Burt Bacharach and Hal David wrote in their prime. The singers are Melinda Gilb, Steve Gunderson, Sue Mosher, and Lillias White. Kathy Najimy directed. (Club 53, at the New York Hilton, Sixth Ave. at 53rd St. 261-5853.)

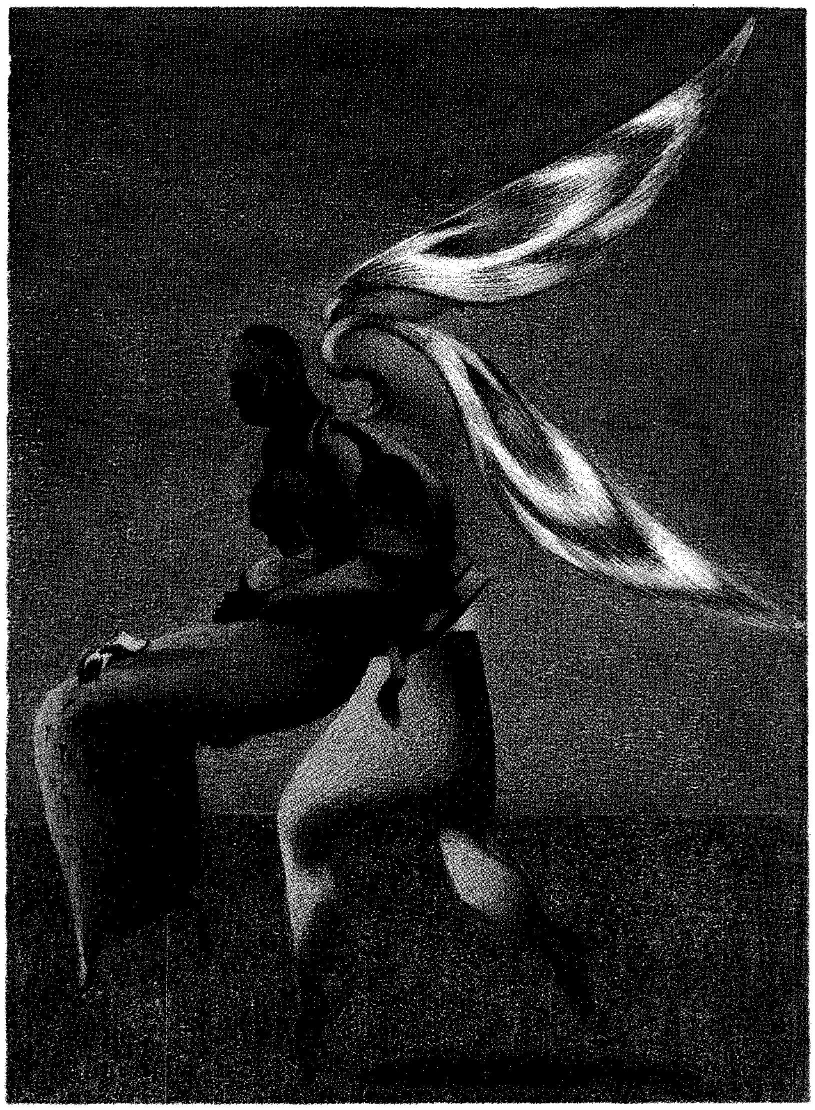
Blood Brothers—A glum non-musical musical, imported from Britain, about twin boys who are separated at birth. (Their mother, a cleaning woman, gives one of them to her employer.) The boys become friends, love the same girl, and die violent deaths. Willy Russell, whose credentials are good, wrote book, music, and lyrics, to no avail. With Con O'Neill, Stephanie Lawrence, Jan Graveson, and Mark Michael Hutchinson, among other worthy actors. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/10/93.) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Breaks—A play by Deb Margolin and Rae C. Wright. (Interart Theatre, 549 W. 52nd St. 246-1050.)

Christina Alberta's Father—A new musical by Polly Penn, adapted from the novel by H. G. Wells. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. Closes May 30.)

A Doll House—The Pan Asian Repertory Theatre offers John R. Briggs' adaptation of the Ibsen play. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 245-2660. Closes May 22.)

Ensemble Studio Theatre—The 1993 marathon of one-acts continues with "Fore," by Frank D. Gilroy, starring M. Emmett Walsh; "Ring of Men," by Adam Oliensis, featuring Corey Parker; "A Farewell to Mum," by Julie McKee; and "Tunnel of Love," by Jacquelyn Reingold. Through May 30. (549 W. 52nd



Cordelia Gonzalez and Danitra Vance in "Marisol," at the Public.

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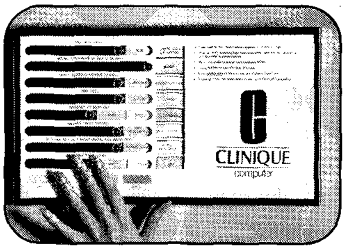

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THE THEATRE-Cont'd

St. 247-3405. The marathon continues until June 13.)

Fool Moon—Bill Irwin and David Shiner are the inspired clowns in a show that is perfection itself. The only sound you'll hear is the merry music of the Red Clay Ramblers and the abundant laughter of the audience. (3/8/93) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)

Forbidden Broadway 1993—Once again, a galaxy of parodies that sharpen into satire. This edition is as witty as most of its predecessors. Among the newer shows under consideration are "Guys and Dolls" and "Falsettos," and the holdovers include "Les Misérables" and "The Phantom of the Opera." Gerard Alessandrini, as if you had to be told, is the clever writer and director, and Susanne Blakeslee, Dorothy Kiara, Brad Oscar, and Craig Wells are the splendid performers, doing a large assortment of roles. (1/25/93) (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

The Goodbye Girl—Bernadette Peters and Martin Short, two brilliant, funny stars, transform this otherwise indifferent musical adaptation of Neil Simon's movie into a sporadically festive evening. The dances by Graciela Daniele are more than helpful, as is the comic support by John Christopher Jones. Score by Marvin Hamlisch, lyrics by David Zippel. Michael Kidd directed. (3/15/93) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Hello Muddah, Hello Fadduh—A musical based on the song parodies of Allan Sherman and offering further proof that Camp Lite is taking over Off Broadway. The show was conceived and written by Douglas Bernstein and Rob Krausz. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

Jeffrey—A comedy, by Paul Rudnick, about love in the age of AIDS; with John Michael Higgins. It is less a fleshed-out play than a series of Scenes from Gay Life, but Mr. Rudnick can quip with the best of them. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane. 420-8000.)

Kiss of the Spider Woman—A musical by John Kander (score), Fred Ebb (lyrics), and Terrence McNally (book), directed by Harold Prince. With Chita Rivera, Brent Carver, and Anthony Crivello. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Linda—The Ridiculous Theatrical Company goes West in this farcical melodrama about gays and the religious right. The book, despite occasional clunkiness, includes some great lines, and the songs are inspired and tremendously funny. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271.)

Lypsinka! A Day in the Life—John Epperson—a nonpareil if ever there was one—brings his happiness cocktail to Off Broadway. Epperson's come a long way from his late-night club origins: like Cyd Charisse, one of his M-G-M-era idols, he's a long-legged pro. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

Oleanna—David Mamet, in fine, curmudgeonly form, takes on political correctness, sexual harassment, and a number of other topics in this brief, powerful drama that continues to stir up the ideologues. The play's skepticism is as evenhanded as it is corrosive. Treat Williams and Mary McCann make up the cast. (11/16/92) (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 307-4100.)

On a Clear Day You Can See Forever—A benefit revival of the 1965 Alan Jay Lerner–Burton Lane musical. Mr. Lane has provided several songs for this production that were not in the original show. (Harold Clurman, 412 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes May 29.)

Playboy of the West Indies—Mustapha Matura's 1984 adaptation of the J. M. Synge play. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Putting It Together—This celebration of Stephen Sondheim's music features Julie Andrews, Stephen Collins, Christopher Durang, Michael Rupert, and Rachel York. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes May 23.)

Repertorio Español—May's lineup includes "Blood Wedding" and "The House of Bernarda Alba," by Federico García Lorca; "Innocent Eréndira," by Gabriel García Márquez; "Café con Leche," by Gloria González; and "The Italian Grandmother," by Roberto Cossa. All are performed in Spanish; simultaneous English translation, via headsets, is available at some performances of "Blood Wedding" and "Innocent Eréndira." (Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850.)

Royal Dramatic Theatre of Sweden—Presenting Yukio Mishima's **madame de sade** (May 20-22). Directed by Ingmar Bergman and performed in Swedish; simultaneous English translation, via headsets, is available. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100.)

Shakespeare for My Father—A marvellous one-woman show, in which Lynn Redgrave reviews her own life in a search for her unloving father, Michael Redgrave. She combines anecdotes, brilliant thumbnail impersonations of British actors, and wry reminiscence with passages from Shakespeare, which she delivers with eloquence and emotion. This essentially serious evening is often as amusing as it is sad. (5/10/93) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

Sharon—A new musical, with a book, lyrics, and direction by Geraldine Fitzgerald and a score by Franklin Micare. Based on the play "Sharon's Grave," by John B. Keane. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

The Sisters Rosensweig—Wendy Wasserstein's new play, a comedy with serious undertones, is about the reunion in London of three American Jewish sisters—an international banker, a travel writer, and a wife and mother who's a professional dispenser of advice. They are portrayed by Jane Alexander, Christine Estabrook, and Madeline Kahn. The spirit of Chekhov hovers but never intrudes. Laughter is continuous. (11/2/92) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Someone Who'll Watch Over Me—Michael York (English), Stephen Rea (Irish), and Chuck Cooper (American) portray hostages in Beirut in Frank McGuinness's moving and humorous play. Robin Lefèvre directed. (12/7/92) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

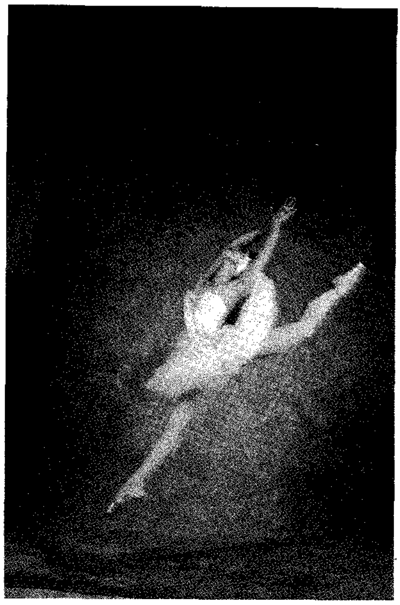
Three Hotels—A new play by Jon Robin Baitz, with Debra Monk and Ron Rifkin. Joe Mantello directed. (Circle Repertory Company, 99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

Time on Fire—Evan Handler wrote and performs this wry, tough, and instructive one-man show about his successful battle with leukemia. Unfortunately, his acting isn't up to his script; he's generally so matter-of-fact that one almost never feels any real connection to what he's going through. He is a great mimic, though, and his observations on the medical profession are scathing. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

The Who's Tommy—Pete Townshend's music—however muted for Broadway—has an indubitable thrill, but director Des McAnuff's production is caught on the horns of a theatrical dilemma that no amount of slick, exhausting spectacle can resolve. The hero, that deaf, dumb, and blind kid, is spectacularly passive, and thus unreachable, unknowable, and essentially undramatic. (5/3/93) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Wild Men!—Subtitled "A Musical . . . Sort Of," this comedy plays on the edges of something with substance, yet finally possesses little of its own. Set in "the North Woods" on a "Wild Man Weekend," the show makes outrageous mockery of the men's movement, its primal yearnings, and its guru, Robert Bly. Though not penetrating, the evening benefits from the vitality of everyone onstage. "Cheers" survivor George Wendt stars, along with a host of Chicago's Second City alums. The excellent percussion was arranged by Judy Nielsen, founder of the Women's Action Coalition Drum Corps, in Chicago. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Wrong Turn at Lungfish—The play owes more to day-in, day-out television than it does to the theatre. With Calista Flockhart, Michael E. Knight, Kathleen Marshall, and Fritz Weaver. (3/8/93) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)



Nina Ananiashvili in "Swan Lake," at A.B.T.

MONROE WARSHAW

LONG RUNS

beau jest: Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. . . . **blue man group/tubes:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **cats:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **crazy for you:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **falsettos:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **the fantasticks:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **forever plaid:** Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. . . . **guys and dolls:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **jelly's last jam:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **les misérables:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **miss saigon:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **the night larry kramer kissed me:** Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 564-8038. . . . **nunsense:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **perfect crime:** Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 695-3401. . . . **the phantom of the opera:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **tony n' tina's wedding:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **the will rogers follies:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—
PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Cirque du Soleil—This intimate one-ring circus from Montreal is presenting a new show, "Saltimbanco," through June 6. (The blue-and-yellow tent at Battery Park City. For information about show times and tickets, call 809-6969.)

"The Invisible Circus"—Victoria Chaplin and Jean Baptiste Thiérrée, creators of "Le Cirque Imaginaire," return with a new show (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 3.)

"Bitch! Dyke! Faghag! Whore!"—Performance artist Penny Arcade tells her own story with bawdy humor and sisterly warmth. (Top of the Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120. Thursdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30.)

P.S. 122—May 20-23 at 7:30: Kurt Fulton and Iris Rose in "Gender Tennis." Through May 30. . . . ¶ May 20-23 at 9: Sara Pearson/Patrik Widrig and Company in "A History of Silence," a comic dance-theatre work. . . . ¶ Fridays and Saturdays at midnight: "Hot Keys," Jeff Weiss's downtown soap opera. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

DANCE

La Argentina Pura

SOME ten years back, the venerable butoh dancer Kazuo Ohno brought a work to New York titled "Admiring La Argentina." The name of the dance referred to the now legendary Spanish dancer Antonia Mercé (1888-1936), called La Argentina for the country in which she was born. Mercé inspired the kind of devotion one associates with Isadora Duncan and Vaslav Nijinsky, and her admirers included the poet Paul Valéry, who described her as an embodiment of "pure dance." Kazuo Ohno saw her perform in Tokyo, in 1928, when he was in his twenties, and decided to become a dancer, even though he had no previous dance training. "Admiring La Argentina" included a recording of Mercé's castanet work—the most delicate, playful castanet work imaginable—and one longed to see her, too. Alas, apparently there are no readily available films of Mercé.

Still, something of the dancer she was is visible in a huge (half life-size) chalk drawing, from 1932, by the Russian artist Alexandre Iacovleff. The drawing is part of a Iacovleff retrospective at À La Vieille Russie (781 Fifth Avenue, at 59th Street; through June 4). Iacovleff, a superlatively talented draftsman, was also a knowledgeable observer of dancing. In this picture he captured La Argentina's ability to do something that dancers sometimes speak of as a goal: to "throw a movement away." Catch it.

New York City Ballet—The Balanchine Celebration. May 19 at 8: "Scotch Symphony," "Ivesiana," the 1953 "Valse-Fantaisie," and "Western Symphony."... ¶ May 20 at 8: "Square Dance," "Agon," "Gounod Symphony," and "Stars and Stripes."... ¶ May 21 at 8: "Allegro Brillante," "Sylvia Pas de Deux," "Episodes," and "Stars and Stripes."... ¶ May 22 at 2: "Swan Lake," "Episodes," and "Gounod Symphony."... ¶ May 22 at 8: "Apollo," "Orpheus," and "Agon."... ¶ May 23 at 1: "Donizetti Variations," "Monumentum pro Gesualdo," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," and "Liebeslieder Walzer."... ¶ May 23 at 7: "Divertimento No. 15," "Episodes," and "Bourrée Fantasque."... ¶ May 25 at 8: "Square Dance," "Liebeslieder Walzer," and "Raymonda Variations." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through June 27.)

American Ballet Theatre—May 19 at 2 and 8 and May 20 at 8: "Symphonie Concertante," "The Informer," and "The Rite of Spring."... ¶ May 21 and May 24-25 at 8 and May 22 at 2 and 8: "Swan Lake." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Through June 12.)

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens—May 19 at 8 and May 22 at 2 and 8: "Private Dances" (American première), "Before Nightfall" (New York première), and "The Green Table."... ¶ May 20-21 at 8 and May 23 at 3: "Paukenschlag," "Na Floresta," and "Désir." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Jazz Tap Ensemble—A nine-member group from Los Angeles. May 19-21 at 8, May 22 at 2 and 8, and May 23 at 2 and 7:30: With guest performer Brenda Bufalino.... ¶ May 25 at 8: With guest artists Harold Nicholas, the American Tap Dance Orchestra, and Baakari Wilder. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through May 30.)

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FRATELLI
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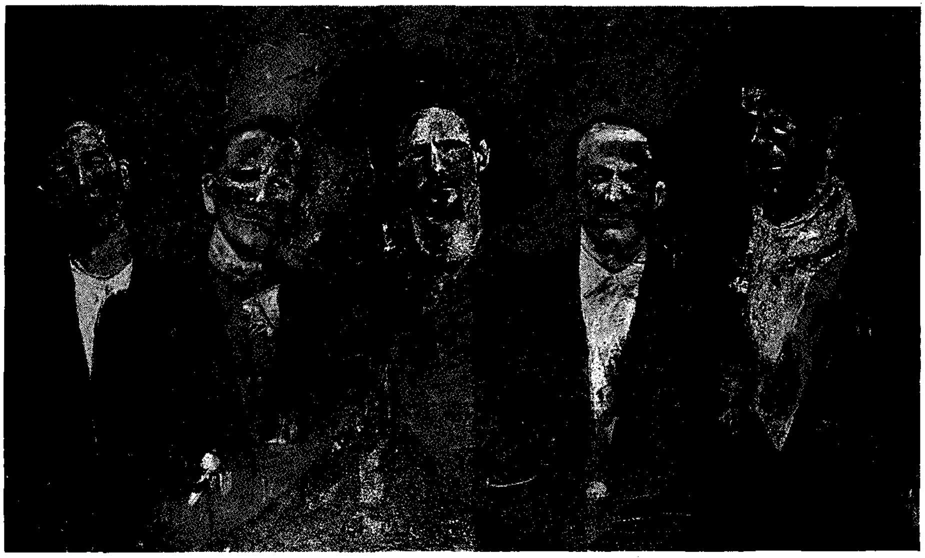
NIGHT LIFE

Ace of Clubs

AMERICAN MUSIC CLUB'S colorless name is a kind of grifter's camouflage, like the Joe Friday suits and porkpie hats the band members wear. The cover of the San Francisco quintet's first major-label album, "Mercury," is another subterfuge: the grandiose and bleak photograph of temple ruins in Thailand would have been a perfect shot for a Led Zeppelin record. Even the current pop-press lionizing of the band has a deceptive effect, making it seem as though a box of trendy new puppies has landed on the doorstep.

The truth is that the band has emerged from nine years of low-rent gigs, day jobs, and cult status with a spectacularly unfashionable and eccentric sound that has little to do with anything else in conventional rock and a lot in common with the wall-banging late-career work of Tom Waits and the dark soundtrack waltzes of Nino Rota. In fact, Mark Eitzel, the band's singer and lyricist, is perhaps the finest poet of tenderloin passion and despair since Waits. His songs are full of brilliant and appalling images, and he delivers his lines in a breathy, slightly throttled tenor that ranges from a near-speaking voice to a full Sinatra cry. The melodies seem to drift, but they arrive at the exact allusive destinations Eitzel's words are seeking. The band's shows are wrenching, draining, but beautifully articulated events, and the chance to see them, either at Maxwell's (May 21) or at Irving Plaza (May 25), should not be passed up.



American Music Club.

TIM BOWER

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out some of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**TOVAH FELDSHUH** continues her run in the Oak Room through May 22. Dining.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Once you get past the rough bits here—the hordes of tourists, the cattle-car seating, the stiff prices—you're likely to find yourself face to face with some of the biggest names in jazz. Singer-songwriter **DIANNE REEVES** is here through May 23. With a style reminiscent of the late, great Sarah Vaughan, Reeves parlays a rich tone and rhythmic elasticity into a winning combination. Since the release, eleven years ago, of her first album, "Welcome to My Love," this Colorado native's recording career has, much like Al Jarreau's, wavered between adult, jazz-flavored R. & B., reworked standards, and hard bop. In a small club, expect the accent to be on the last.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A great black loft that's jammed with row after row of tables—it looks a little like the site of a standardized test. Despite the cramped quarters, though, the Bottom Line is a pleasant place to take in a folk or rock show. **BUSTER POINDEXTER** and his group perform May 21-22; the **MARTY BALIN** band claims May 24.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is currently home to **BOBBY SHORT.** . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** presides at the piano.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—The city's most famed rock club—a dark, narrow cave with neon-beer-sign stalactites and ancestral graffiti—is part sacred burial ground and part historic landmark, but it hasn't succumbed to nostalgia: new and used bands of every stripe continue to burn brightly here. **VELOCITY GIRL** arrives on May 21.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—Through the iffy-looking side door, along the famous fun-house tunnel that's lined with mirrors and corrugated tin, and down a short flight of stairs, you'll find this softly lit, low-ceilinged, roughly Manhattan-shaped jazz preserve. Through May 23: the **LOU DONALDSON** quartet, featuring Herman Foster, plus guest Rebecca Coupe Franks. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio.

GRAND, 76 E. 13th St. (777-0600)—The former home of the gone and forgotten Cat Club. Only the velvet rope out front remains. **SEBADOH,** which is here on May 22, was launched in the mid-eighties by former Dinosaur Jr. bassist Lou Barlow and Eric Gaffney, who both sing and play several instruments in the group. Sebadoh's first few records were such a hiss-ridden, no-budget mixture of bedroom-studio nonsense and brilliance that when you listened to them you kept expecting to hear a band member's mother call him down to dinner. The group has since become a college-rock favorite, and was recently signed to Seattle's Sub Pop label, but recognition has only slightly tempered its anti-pop tendencies. Sebadoh's latest release, "Bubble and Scrape," has its share of actual songs, but these are inevitably deconstructed by bursts of loopy improvisation.

IRVING PLAZA, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St.—This two-floor establishment has been all things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. Physically, the place is sagging a bit, but that's part of its appeal. **AMERICAN MUSIC CLUB** appears on May 25. For concert information, call 249-8870. . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday night, at the Continental Club. The dancers all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. **BILL CONWAY AND THE SWING EXPRESS** hold forth on May 23. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the Society, call 696-9737.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—The club most likely to feature an electric-rake player, run by a couple of forward-looking Wisconsinites who book all manner of neo-this and post-that ensembles. The atmosphere is low-key, low-budget bohemian. The **SYD STRAW** band is here on May 22.

LA CAVE ON FIRST, 1125 First Ave., at 62nd St. (759-4011)—Though situated in the basement of an Upper East Side Mexican restaurant (Pancho Villa), this is an establishment worth checking out. There's nothing trendy, or even distinguishing, about it, and that may be the secret of its appeal. The entertainment varies, from tap dancing one night to gospel the next. **DAKOTA STATON** claims May 22. On Wednesdays, the wonderful blues singer and pianist **BOB GADDY** has the stage.

LIMELIGHT, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—The Belgian rave outfit **L.A. STYLE,** who are here on May 25, starts with the ubiquitous thumping beats and burbling sequencers of techno and hones the din down to a cool racket; they spice things up with clattering industrial-style sound effects and ironic vocal samples. Their biggest hit is "James Brown Is Dead," a sick-joke title that nevertheless neatly sums up the harder side of Continental techno—a dance movement that owes more to Kraftwerk than to the hip-hop descendants of the Godfather of Soul.

LONE STAR ROADHOUSE, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—The unofficial Texas Consulate and Ministry of Culture. As part of the "Country Takes Manhattan" campaign, three local acts will perform on May 19: **COURTNEY & WESTERN, FIVE CHINESE BROTHERS,** and **ANGEL DEAN & THE ZEPHYRS.** These acts have plenty to recommend them: foot-tapping rhythm, twangin' guitar licks, and plaintive ballads. All three record for another local enterprise, the independent label Diesel Only, which was founded in 1990 by members of a New York country-rockabilly group called the World Famous Blue Jays. The label is devoted to "rig rock"—music for truck-stop jukeboxes—and its production was initially limited to 45 r.p.m. records. Blue Jays guitarist Jay Sherman-Godfrey will be sitting in with Angel Dean & the Zephyrs.

MANNY'S CAR WASH, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—Don't go expecting to be sprayed with soapy water and massaged by large brushes: the fluorescent sign outside is the only car-wash reference. Inside, the place looks like an adman's idea of a blues bar. The veteran bluesman **CLARENCE (GATEMOUTH) BROWN,** who's here on May 20, puts on shows that are an unusual assemblage of swing, boogie-woogie, pop, soul, and R. & B.—and, of course, blues. A set might include anything from Duke Ellington to the Righteous Brothers' "Unchained Melody." Brown, who is in his seventies, is tall and lanky, and is given to wearing Stetson hats and rodeo apparel. Onstage, he has an easy, good-natured manner, but the sound that comes from his guitar is searing.

declaration of love. A tulip offered by a young man to his beloved says, "As the redness of the flower
and died. Mounting his horse, he galloped off the edge of a rocky escarpment, meeting death instantly. As blood
seeped from his wounds, red tulips sprang up all around.

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NIGHT LIFE—Cont'd

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—The bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. May 21: AMERICAN MUSIC CLUB and Ed's Redeeming Qualities. May 22: the Barleycorns and Greenberry Woods.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—The main dining room strives for the appearance of a British pub but looks more like a good old American family restaurant. Still, there's a nice red telephone booth when you walk in the door. NANCY MARANO and EDDIE MONTEIRO are the current attraction.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A moondust-in-your-hair cabaret where a club soda costs, well, a *lot.* BILLY STRITCH, who's in the midst of an engagement here, has been familiar to cabaret audiences since the early eighties, when he was a member of the Houston trio Montgomery, Plant & Stritch. Since embarking on a solo career in 1990, he's followed a steady upward trajectory, moving from the modest Village cabaret Eighty-Eight's to this room, where he had a successful run last year. Stritch is a pianist-singer rooted in forties and fifties swing. His voice is appealing but not exceptional; his real strengths are the warmth, charm, and assurance he brings to his material, as well as his considerable keyboard skills. At this engagement, Stritch will play material from his first album—"Billy Stritch," a breezy, swinging collection of standards, with the occasional Brazilian flavoring—and beyond, roaming from Harold Arlen and George Gershwin to Dave Frishberg and Billy Joel. Closed Mondays.

RITZ, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—This space was once a theatre, as the cherubim friezes and Louis the Something ceiling attest. Then it was Studio 54, and, if you try hard, you can still hear the grunts, moans, and snorts of seventies disco ghosts. Now it's a cavernous rock club. May 19: ROBYN HITCHCOCK & THE EGYPTIANS, with Murray Attaway. May 21: Danzig. May 22: Faster Pussycat and Lilian Axe.

RUSSIAN TEA ROOM, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Upstairs, there's a small, red-gold-and-green cabaret. AMANDA MC BROOM completes an engagement here May 20-22. There was a time when HILDEGARDE reigned over the Persian Room in the Plaza, but you're probably too young to remember that. She struck gold in 1935 with "Darling, Je Vous Aime Beaucoup," the macaronic hit by her dear friend Anna Sosenko that would become her theme song, and she was already a veteran when, in 1940, she recorded "The Last Time I Saw Paris," under the personal supervision of its composer, Jerome Kern. She still performs with mischievous panache as she prances through her ninth naughty decade, but what's more remarkable is how well she tickles the ivories without removing her elbow-length gloves. Think it's easy? You try it! She'll be here on May 23, with pianist Bill Wright in tow, as part of what she's calling her "First Farewell Tour." JULIE BUDD offers a Dorothy Fields tribute on May 24.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A pretty serious jazz spot where you have to pass within inches of the stage to reach the rest rooms. MC COY TYNER, AVERY SHARPE, and AARON SCOTT work out for the next couple of weeks. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter MILES EVANS is in action on Mondays. Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The world's most famous jazz club is also the last place in town which still looks, feels, and smells like a classic jazz club—subterranean, smoky, and thick with the spirits of past masters. The NEW YORK-PARIS QUARTET, with Joe Lovano, Kenny Werner, Henri Texier, and Aldo Romano, is here through May 23. Mondays are reserved for the VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA.

ART

A Woman's Work

THERE is no shortage of outspoken art by young women around town right now, but many of these artists seem to be trying to reinvent feminist art, as if unaware of the pioneers of the early seventies, who brought small scale, autobiography, handwork, and unapologetic sentimentality to the mainstream. At Brooke Alexander (59 Wooster Street; through June 5), a serendipitous show of mixed-medium works from 1971 to 1974 by the inspiring Ree Morton (who died in 1977) resurrects some nearly forgotten achievements by a former Navy wife for whom feminism brought true liberation.

The works seem more vital and complex now than when they were first shown. For Morton the women's movement was an invitation to glory in uncertainty, to utilize contradiction as a noble aesthetic guide, a means of transcending reality with wit and poetry. This was certainly the case with her "Wood Drawings," which fuse the calligraphy of 2-D mark-making with the 3-D construction of wood sculpture. Feminism also enabled Morton to help lead the language of abstraction into a narrative art informed by daily experience, a shift beautifully recorded in her installation work "Souvenir Piece." One section of it consists of a table with a display of elfin sculptures made of bits of wood and rock gathered during a vacation in Newfoundland with her children, while on the wall behind it hangs an arrangement of playfully diagrammatic paintings that refer both to the "souvenirs" and to her children's games. The show stops short of the influential decorative works for which she was better known, yet here one glimpses the brazen sentimentality that would soon come to full flower in her art.

Self-portrait by Thomas Woodruff (P.P.O.W).

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"The Greek Miracle: Classical Sculpture from the Dawn of Democracy, the Fifth Century B.C." Through May 23. . . . ¶ "Abstract Expressionism: Works on Paper, Selections from the Collection" features more than sixty drawings and paintings, by de Kooning, Motherwell, Rothko, and many others. . . . ¶ "Splendid Legacy: The Havemeyer Collection." Through June 20. . . . ¶ "The Waking Dream: Photography's First Century" showcases rare prints from 1839 to 1939. . . . ¶ The New Costume Institute's first show, "Infra-Apparel," puts into perspective the phenomenon—not at all confined to the present day—of underwear worn as outerwear. . . . ¶ "Persian Tiles" presents more than fifty examples from the museum's collection, most of them from the mid-thirteenth century. . . . ¶ "The Art of Pre-Columbian Gold: The Jan Mitchell Collection." (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—Dadaist photomontages by John Heartfield and photographs by Philip-Lorca diCorcia. . . . ¶ Drypoints by Braque and Picasso, Pop art that incorporates commercial signs, and computer-assisted photolithographs are among the more than ninety works in "Reading Prints," an installation tracing the role of language in art. . . . ¶ "Cinderella," an installation, both whimsical and poignant, of seventeen photographs, in which the cast of characters are William Wegman's sad-faced weimaraners. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Picasso and the Age of Iron," an installation of some of this century's most engaging sculpture. The show includes work by Alexander Calder, Alberto Giacometti, Julio González, and David Smith. Through June 13. (Open daily, except Thursdays, 10 to 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SOHO, 575 Broadway—Seventy-five paintings, watercolors, drawings, and prints by Paul Klee (1879-1940), dating from 1903 to 1939 and all from the museum's permanent collection. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday through Saturday evenings until 10.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—After all the pans and the pedantry and pretension, the 1993 Biennial is probably still worth seeing, if only for works by Nan Goldin, Pepón Osorio, Nancy Spero, and other indubitable highlights. Through June 13. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—"Manet to Picasso" is a choice show of thirty-five works on paper, dating from 1871 to 1937 and all drawn from the museum's collection. Through May 23. . . . ¶ "Pieces of String Too Short to Save," an installation by Donald Lipski, made of found objects—gloves, candles, books, etc. Starts May 20. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"The Hall of Human Biology and Evolution," a new permanent exhibition. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

JAPAN SOCIETY, 333 E. 47th St.—"Rain and Snow: The Umbrella in Japanese Art," an exhibition of a hundred and forty objects, dating from the seventeenth century through the twentieth, that includes not only umbrellas but paintings, illustrated books, period photographs, textiles, netsuke, sword fittings, ceramics, export silver, and prints. Through June 27. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"Presents of the Past" highlights the museum's recent acquisitions, including Tiffany silver, paintings, prints, and much more. Starts May 19. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Assault on the Arts: Culture and Politics in Nazi Germany." Through May 28. . . . ¶ "Dandies and Decadence: British Writers at the Turn of the Century." (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 5:45; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5:45.)

Queens Museum of Art, Flushing Meadow Park—"Barbara Ess: Photography, Installation, and Books: 1978-91." A retrospective of work by an artist whose mediums include audiocassettes, handmade books, and, above all, pinhole-camera photography. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Daniel Buren/Nancy Holt—A Buren show is always something of a subversive event, this one joyously so. He has applied his standard stripes to a wall drawing recalling the work of Sol LeWitt, using broad red pilasters to divide the gallery's walls into large squares and then applying black-and-white striped Plexiglas panels to the interior squares in various symmetrical arrangements. / Holt has been quietly developing a public art composed of metal and earth, which refers in its configurations to solstices and planetary arrangements. This show of drawings documents several recent schemes. Some seem destined to be little more than New Age altars, but the more interesting ones are part of an ambitious approach to land reclamation—reconfiguring strip mines and dump sites as public parks. Her plans for a sand quarry in Finland look especially good. Through May 22. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

Suzan Etkin—This provocative show seems to take as its point of departure the belief that the Princess Syndrome that has crippled many a grown woman is embodied in a little girl's ballerina fantasies. On display are sculptural casts of female body parts—nearly abstract images of dismemberment. Behind them a metal revolving staircase is in a perpetual pirouette. The tour de force here is a display of thirty glass perfume bottles, each shaped like one of the many vessels and architectural elements that have been said through the ages to embody notions of the female and the maternal—from an ionic column to a breast—and capped with a ballerina stopper. Through May 29. (Kasmin, 74 Grand St.)

Guillermo Kuitca—This show of Kuitca's very detailed map paintings includes a crisply delineated work entitled "Kristallnacht," which is a slice of Europe, from Poland to Switzerland, divided into colored registers like a stained-glass window. Another work is deliberately ill-defined, with its image a blur in a charcoal mist. A related group of paintings, the artist's most figurative, takes as its image floor plans for apartments: one is caked with cracked paint and quite effectively depicts barrenness, while another—defined by a perimeter of thorns—is a jarring image of the shut-in. Through June 12. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

Collier Schorr—This artist is proving herself to be one of the most complex of the new feminist artists. She takes a deliberately fragile approach to her small narrative paintings, which in their various ways challenge stereotypes about lesbians. In many paintings she places a bowl of eggs as a kind of eloquent rumination on fertility and childlessness, and there are other coded images, such as toppled wedding cakes and a suspended bed. Many have been coated with an ethereal top layer of milky white paint. Through May 22. (303 Gallery, 89 Greene St.)

Tony Smith (1912-80)—A rather eccentric piece from the early sixties by this fine protominimalist sculptor. Both monumental and humanly scaled, "Willy," named for a Samuel Beckett character, is a three-legged form made of components from more rigorously geometrical works. As with all Smith's works, it is strongly architectural. In accompanying drawings from various series one finds the sculptural roots of Bladen, LeWitt, Judd, and all the systemic work of the sixties. Through May 29. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

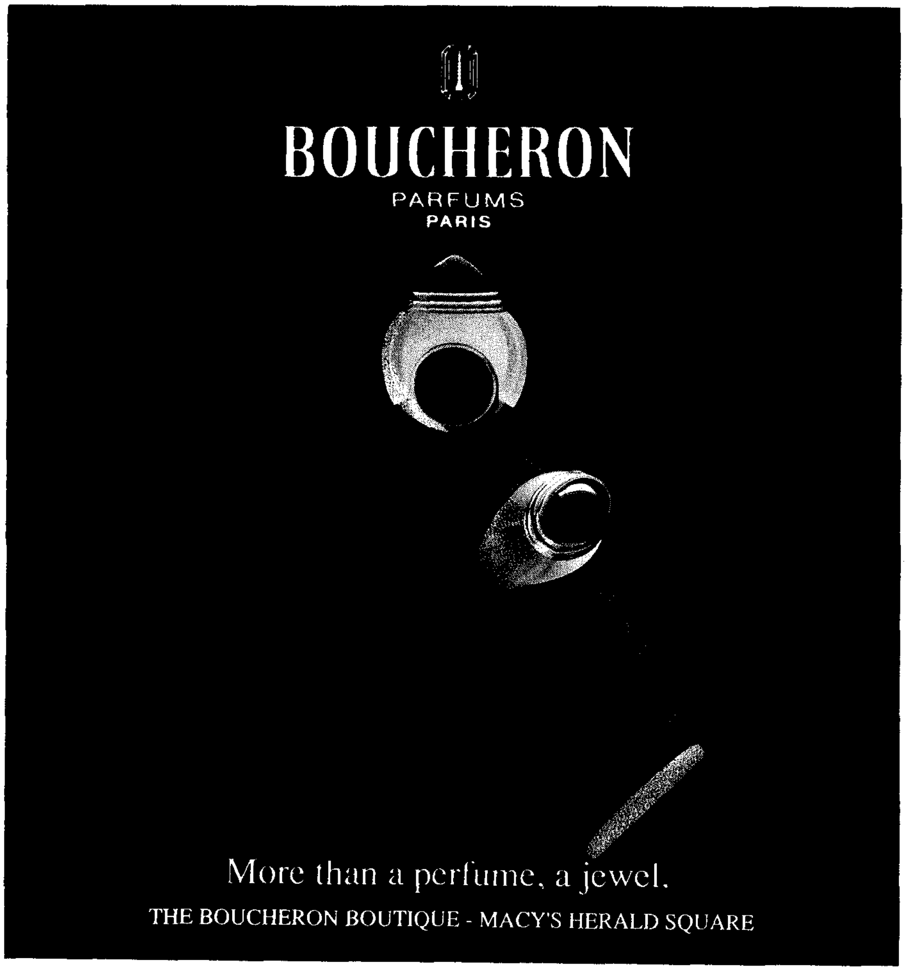
Thomas Woodruff—This artist has gone over the top with his semi-parodic Victorian glazed-panel paintings in carnival colors. These works allude to AIDS, and Woodruff has lifted many of his motifs from Ross Bleckner's AIDS paintings. The heaviest borrowing is in Woodruff's shield-shaped paintings, with their fluttering birds and starry skies. The artist's original contribution is the repeated central image of a skull, which defines the paintings as memento mori. The elaborate gilt frames are covered with tinted mirror chips. There are also large *vanitas* paintings of Pre-Raphaelite maidens festooned with flowers and jewels. The most haunting paintings are of crying or smiling babies, each viewed through a hole cut into wood and surrounded by heaps of decorative finery. Through May 29. (P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway.)

"Spirit of Drawing"—An amiable and romantic show of ninety-three drawings—many of them quite fine—by a range of artists, from Leger, Sironi, and Balla through a new generation of young Italians. Through June 12. (Sperone Westwater, 121 Greene St.)

Short List—**Nicolas Africano:** Holly Solomon, 172 Mercer St. Through June 12. . . . **Siah Armajani:** Protetch, 560 Broadway. Through June 12. . . . **John Beerman:** Beitzel, 102 Prince St. Through May 29. . . . **Howard Ben Tré:** Cowles, 420 West Broadway. Through June 5. . . . **Elizabeth Catlett:** Kelly, 591 Broadway. Through June 8. . . . **Hanne Darboven:** Castelli, 420 West Broadway. Through May 22. . . . **Mark di Suvero:** Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. Through June 12. . . . **Constance Dodge:** Eno, 594 Broadway. Through May 27. . . . **Lawrence Fane:** Bace, 2 Bond St. Through May 29. . . . **Günther Forg:** Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St. Through May 29. . . . **Katharina Fritsch:** Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St. Through June 22. . . . **Michael Goldberg:** Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway. Through June 26. . . . **Felix González-Torres:** Rosen, 130 Prince St. Through May 29. . . . **Mary Heilmann:** Hearn, 39 Wooster St. Through May 22. . . . **Y. Z. Kami:** Toll, 146 Greene St. Through June 12. . . . **Vincent Longo:** Condeso-Lawler, 524 Broadway. Through June 5. . . . **Carlo Maria Mariani:** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 420 West Broadway. Through May 28. . . . **Will Mentor:** Rubenstein-Diacono, 130 Prince St. Through June 25. . . . **John Monti** and **Bill Weiss:** Ledisflam, 584 Broadway. Through May 22. . . . **Richard Pettibone:** Marcus, 578 Broadway. Through June 5. . . . **Odilon Redon:** The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. Through May 28. . . . **Peter Shelton:** Louver, 130 Prince St. Through May 29. . . . **Haim Steinbach:** Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway. Through June 26. . . . **Robert van Vranken** and **Jay Kelly:** O. K. Harris, 383 West Broadway. Through May 22. . . . **James Welling** and **Michael Jenkins:** Gorney, 100 Greene St. Through May 29.

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Magdalena Abakanowicz—There is something of the cliché to this artist's existentialist



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figures, but also power in their triumph over it. A very large older work is a heap of six hundred burlap-covered, potato-shaped forms of every size, while most of the other sculptures are of Abakanowicz' characteristic headless bodies. Whether made of bronze or hardened burlap, most are engaged in the balancing act of life, either standing side by side, as if holding one another erect, or perched precariously atop wheels, tree trunks, or blade-thin plinths. There is always a sense of peril to the artist's figures, and of their resignation to it. Through June 5. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Alberto Giacometti—A spectacular show of one of this century's great sculptors. The works are mostly from the fifties and sixties, the artist's mature phase, and include a sinewy cat, various heads, busts, and walking men and women, some of them so flattened in form that they wreak havoc on the classical kouros, others so ethereal in their attenuation that they seem positively extraterrestrial. This is a reverential show, but one that also allows the artist's humor to shine through. Most of the sculptures are placed around the perimeter of the gallery, facing the center, as if they were statues of the Caesars. In the center are several more works, including the artist's existential masterpiece "City Square II." Through June 19. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Anselm Kiefer—What is the meaning of this Babel-like pile of twenty years' worth of paintings covered with dirt and rocks and decaying sunflowers by the most mythicized artist of his generation? Is it a symbolic cleansing, an attempt to start afresh? Is it a failed attempt to bury the past? Or is it an unearthing by some future generation of the "masterpieces" of our time, now reduced to colored fabric and stone and dust? Is this a daring move—a sacrifice—to take so many financially valuable art works and chuck them in a single work whose price couldn't begin to approach what had heretofore been their accumulated value? Is this a monument to the whimsies of the marketplace? A pile of vanities awaiting its bonfire? And what is to be made of the long table heaped with books, mostly blank, all covered with the yellowed, dribbled trails of twenty years of the artist's ejaculations? A need for the artist, endorsed by many as the genius of neo-expressionism, to call himself nothing more than a masturbator? Or is this stud register another self-mythologizing gesture, that even his sperm can be spun into gold? Through June 19. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Hiromitsu Morimoto/Liu Dan—In Japan, serious art galleries are often found in department stores, but when Saks Fifth Avenue tried to establish an art department here, about ten years ago, it failed. Undaunted, the Japanese firm of Takashimaya has opened a gallery on the first and second floors of its new store on Fifth Avenue. The inaugural show presents the works of Morimoto, a Japanese artist who lives in New York, and Liu Dan, a Chinese artist who lives in Hawaii and England. Morimoto offers large, faint black-and-white photographs on linen of women, some nude, others delicately draped. The artist has given these rather contrived works the look of vintage photographs, as well as an expressive aura, by brushing his emulsion on in broad, sweeping strokes. Liu Dan's work is more ambitious and showy. He seems intent on augmenting traditional Chinese landscape painting with some of the muscle and macho of Western art. He's got the vertical layering of rock and the intense atmosphere down pat, but the sixty-six-foot scroll that is the centerpiece of his display is, for all its pomp and noise, oddly inexpressive. His smaller, measured paintings of single rocks work much better. Through June 12. (693 Fifth Ave., at 54th St.)

I.B.M. Gallery of Science and Art—"Master European Paintings from the National Gallery of Ireland." Through June 26.... ¶ "Georgia O'Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz, Two Lives." Through June 26. (590 Madison Ave., at 56th St.)

Short List—**gifford beal:** Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through June 18.... **elizabeth butterworth:** Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. Through June 12.... **alexander calder:** O'Hara, 41 E. 57th St. Through May 29.... **john constable** and **david lucas:** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. Through June 5. (Open Mondays).... **paterson ewen:** Baldacci, 41 E. 57th St. Through June 5.... **mary frank:** Midtown-Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through June 4.... **childe hassam:** Berry-Hill, 11 E. 70th St. Through June 26. (Open Mondays).... **charles howard:** Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St. Through June 18.... **gwen john** and **addie herder:** Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St. The former through May 28, the latter through June 4.... **john keane** and **frances hynes:** Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St. Through May 21.... **david ligare:** Stiebel Modern, 32 E. 57th St. Through June 5.... **brice marden:** Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. Through June 26.... **jan müller** and **bob thompson:** Vanderwoude Tananbaum, 24 E. 81st St. Through May 29.... **dennis oppenheim:** Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St. Through June 12.... **alfonso ossorio:** Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through June 26.... **bill pangburn:** De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St. Through May 29.... **beverly pepper:** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. Through May 28.... **macha poynder:** La Boetie, 9 E. 82nd St. Through May 28.... **robert rauschenberg:** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. Through June 4.... **arnaldo roche:** Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St. Through June 12....**joel shapiro:** Pace, 32 E. 57th St. Through June 18.... **burton silverman:** Keiffer, 28 E. 72 St. Through June 5.... **richard smith:** Feigen, 49 E. 68th St. Through June 25.... **xul solar:** Adler, 41 E. 57th St. Through June 30.... **john stockdale** and **pia schutzmann:** Urdang, 23 E. 74th St. Through May 22.... **pavel tchelitchew:** Rosenfeld, 50 W. 57th St. Through May 29.... **joyce treiman:** Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. Through June 28.... **john h. twachtman:** Spanierman, 50 E. 78th St. Through July 2.

Self-portrait by Robert Mapplethorpe (1972).

© 1972 THE ESTATE OF ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE

PHOTOGRAPHY

Snapshots

SOMETIMES it's amazing to look at artists' early scribbles, because in those marks is the essential stuff that later becomes what we call their vision. Such an opportunity is available at Robert Miller (41 East 57th Street; through June 25), which is currently showing some of the many Polaroids that Robert Mapplethorpe shot between 1971 and 1975—the seeds of what became his vision. Of course, the Polaroids don't have the pristine finish that eventually made his photography so classical, in its own way, but his basic terrain is pretty much laid out in these snaps. Here the intimacy that was so characteristic of his work is perhaps even more pronounced, because of the sense of private experimentation that these Polaroids have. This is Mapplethorpe before he had made a name for himself, before he had good equipment and a proper studio, before he had the entrée that made him such an out-and-about figure. This is the young artist still hanging out in his own small world, with Patti Smith and other friends. This is also the artist exploring a prescient hunch that their lives (their sex lives included) were a subject for photography. Perhaps more than anything else, these Polaroids show Mapplethorpe exploring himself—the self-portraits make that explicitly clear.

"Malcolm X, A Photo History"—More than ninety images, including work by Bob Adelman, Eve Arnold, and Robert Haggins, Malcolm's personal photographer, all taken between 1959 and 1965. Through June 27. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Short List—**bobby neel adams**: Germans van Eck, 420 West Broadway. Through May 22.... **james casebere**: Klein, 594 Broadway. Through May 29....**william claxton**: Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Through May 22.... **william clift**: Equitable Gallery, 787 Seventh Ave., at 51st St. Through June 12.... **alexandra edwards** and **michael howells**: Danziger, 415 West Broadway. Through May 29.... **arthur elgort**: Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. Through July 3.... **robert frank**: Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. Through June 26.... **nan goldin** and **josef koudelka**: Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. Through June 12.... **christopher james**: Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Starts May 25.... **david levinthal** and **edward curtis**: Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. Through June 30.... **richard misrach**: Mann, 42 E. 76th St. Through June 5.... **andrea modica**: Saul, 560 Broadway. Through July 2.... **dorothy norman**: International Center of Photography. Through June 27.... **elaine sturtevant**: Stux, 163 Mercer St. Through May 29.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Queens Museum.)

MUSIC

End of the Wait

In the half century or so during which the world first absorbed Wagner, a startling number of composers fought shy of opera, or stumbled over it. Mahler, immersed in it as a performer, wrote none. Nor did Wagner's antipode Brahms, nor his acolyte Bruckner, nor (apart from a negligible piece of juvenilia) his champion Liszt. The form had been reinvented by earthquake, and a period of assimilation seems to have been necessary. Outside the German-speaking world it was a little easier (though even there Grieg and Elgar are unrepresented). Debussy completed only one—a reinvention of his own, which has become a landmark. His great contemporary Fauré, waiting even longer, completed likewise a solitary work, which has been largely forgotten. It seems never to have been staged in this country. Opera Manhattan, one of the city's several small opera troupes that gear up for their major productions as the big-house season winds down, will give it four times this week and next in the sanctuary of the Church of the Heavenly Rest, on Fifth Avenue and Ninetieth Street. Fauré went against the habits of 1913 and, to all appearances, against his own earlier affinities, in choosing a Homeric subject: his opera, "Pénélope," treats the long wait of Ulysses' bride for his homecoming. There is hardly any such thing as an unknown score any longer; "Pénélope" is easily accessible on two major-name recordings. But it should be fascinating to see whether, and how, this sustained lyrical reflection plays in the theatre. (Incidentally, the most celebrated of the many Baroque operas on the subject, Monteverdi's "Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria," is to arrive at BAM next month in a Netherlands Opera production that has won glowing notices abroad for its innovative ensemble approach, apparently an attempt to restore the artistic initiative to the individual singers and actors of the play. Now, there's a radical idea.)

(The box-office number for Avery Fisher Hall is 875-5030, and for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800.)

OPERA

Opera Manhattan—Gabriel Fauré's "Pénélope," premièred in 1913, here receives what appears to be its first staging in the United States. Performed in French, with English supertitles, with a reduced orchestration; conducted by Gabriel Guimarães. (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. May 19 and May 21 at 8. Through May 28. For information about tickets, call 315-3161.)

Center for Contemporary Opera—Presenting "Insect Comedy: The World We Live In," a new opera by Martin Kalmanoff, with a libretto by Lewis Allan. Richard Marshall conducts, and Lou Galterio provided the stage direction. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Lexington Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. May 20-22 at 8 and May 23 at 3.)

Chinese Opera—The conclusion of a series designed to spotlight the principal styles of Chinese Opera. May 21 at 7: Shao-Xing Opera. . . . ¶ May 22 at 2: Kun Opera. . . . ¶ May 22 at 7: Cantonese Opera. . . . ¶ May 23 at 2: A showcase of the Kun, Cantonese, Shao-Xing, and Beijing styles. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.)

Bronx Opera—Presenting "Così fan Tutte," fully staged and sung in English, with Michael Spierman conducting. (John Jay College Theatre, 899 Tenth Ave., between 58th and 59th Sts. May 21-22 at 8. For information about tickets, call 408-1661.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Kurt Masur conducts music by two curmudgeons who lived a hundred years apart: Beethoven and Ives. The program, however, promises to be greater than the sum of its parts. It opens with Ives' "The Unanswered Question" (the composer subtitled it "A Cosmic Landscape"), in which a solo trumpet's reiteration of "the perennial question of existence" is answered, on the one hand, by increasingly hectic and inconclusive jabber from the woodwinds and, on the other, by the unimpassioned immutability of muted strings ("the silence of the Druids—who know, see, and hear nothing," according to Ives). The answer to Ives' question, it would seem, is here provided by Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, which, with its last-movement choral setting of Schiller's "Ode to Joy," has yet to be outdone as an emphatic affirmation of optimistic humanism. With the New York Choral Artists and soprano Benita Valente, mezzo-soprano Janis Taylor, tenor Richard Leech, and bass-baritone Robert Holl. (Avery Fisher Hall. May 20-22 at 8 and May 25 at 7:30.)

Sacred Music in a Sacred Space—Kent Tritle directs Saint-Saëns' Mass (Op. 4) for orchestra, organ, choir, and soloists, in what is thought to be the first New York performance of this work, which dates from 1855. Mr. Tritle will also perform as soloist in Poulenc's Organ Concerto, conducted by Richard Westenburg. (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. 439-8044. May 19 at 8.)

New Amsterdam Singers—Clara Longstreth directs Britten's "Rejoice in the Lamb," "Five Flower Songs," and "Hymn to St. Cecilia," on an all-English program that also roams through the works of Elgar, Gerald Finzi, Thea Musgrave, Edmund Rubbra, and Vaughan Williams. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. May 19 at 8. For information about tickets, call 662-6523.)

Oratorio Society of New York—Lyndon Woodside directs Bernstein's "Chichester Psalms," Bloch's "Sacred Service" (featuring cantor Howard Nevison), and works by composers who were interned at the Terezin concentration camp (including the "Study for String Orchestra" by Pavel Haas and choral pieces by Gideon Klein and Viktor Ullman). (Carnegie Hall. May 19 at 8.)

Riverside Choral Society—Patrick Gardner directs Mozart's C-Minor Mass. (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. May 20 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Juilliard Orchestra—Otto-Werner Mueller conducts three dances from De Falla's "Three-Cornered Hat," Glazunov's Violin Concerto (with Tomohiro Okumura), the symphonic dances from Bernstein's "West Side Story," and Tchaikovsky's "Capriccio Italien." (Alice Tully Hall. May 20 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

Texas Tech University Symphonic Band—James Sudduth conducts original works and arrangements for concert band by Copland, Robert Russell Bennett, and others, including Claude T. Smith's "Fantasia for Alto Saxophone and Band," featuring Dale Underwood. (Carnegie Hall. May 20 at 8.)

I Cantori di New York—Mark Shapiro directs Bach's Cantata No. 131, choral works by Ginastera and Mateo Flecha, and a setting of Psalm 42 by Ronald Roseman (who will perform the work's obbligato oboe part). (St. Luke In-the-Fields, 487 Hudson St., at Grove St. May 22 at 8. For information about tickets, call 439-4758.)

Choral Symphony Society—David Labovitz directs Handel's "Jephtha." (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. May 23 at 2. Admission by contribution.)

New York Youth Symphony—The ensemble closes its thirtieth season by performing Mahler's Symphony No. 1, Ibert's Flute Concerto (featuring Myung-Joo Ahn), and the première of Benedict Weisser's "Singings." Anthony Aibel conducts the Ibert; Samuel Wong leads the rest. (Carnegie Hall. May 23 at 3. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 581-5933.)

Choir of Trinity Church—Owen Burdick directs Haydn's "Great Organ Mass," as well as choral works by a dozen composers who have resided in New York City, including John Corigliano, Lee Hoiby, and Ned Rorem. (St. Paul's Chapel, Broadway at Fulton St. 602-0873. May 23 at 4.)

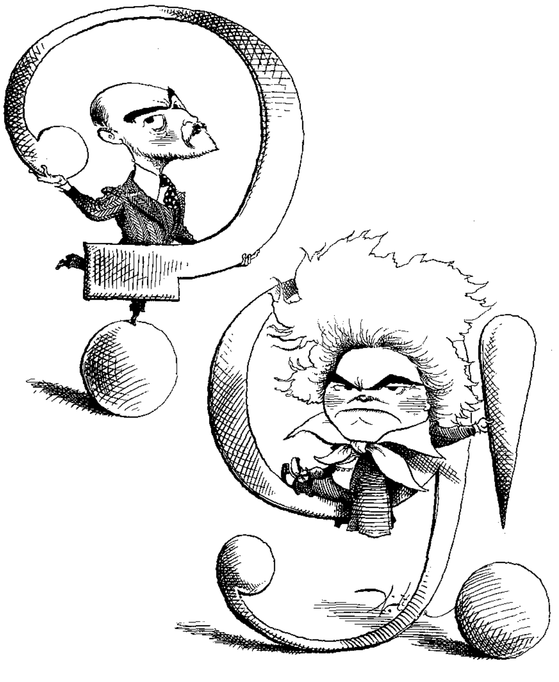
RECITALS

Julia Park—The thirteen-year-old violinist performs Saint-Saëns' Sonata No. 1 and Sarasate's "Carmen Fantasy," among other works; with pianist Akira Eguchi. (Steinway Hall, 109 W. 57th St. May 19 at 7. For information about tickets, call 369-3911.)

Carol Vaness—Soprano, singing Mozart's motet "Exsultate, Jubilate"; songs by Rossini, Poulenc, and Griffes; and arias from Rossini's "William Tell" and Meyerbeer's "Robert le Diable." Pianist Warren Jones assists. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. May 19 at 8.)

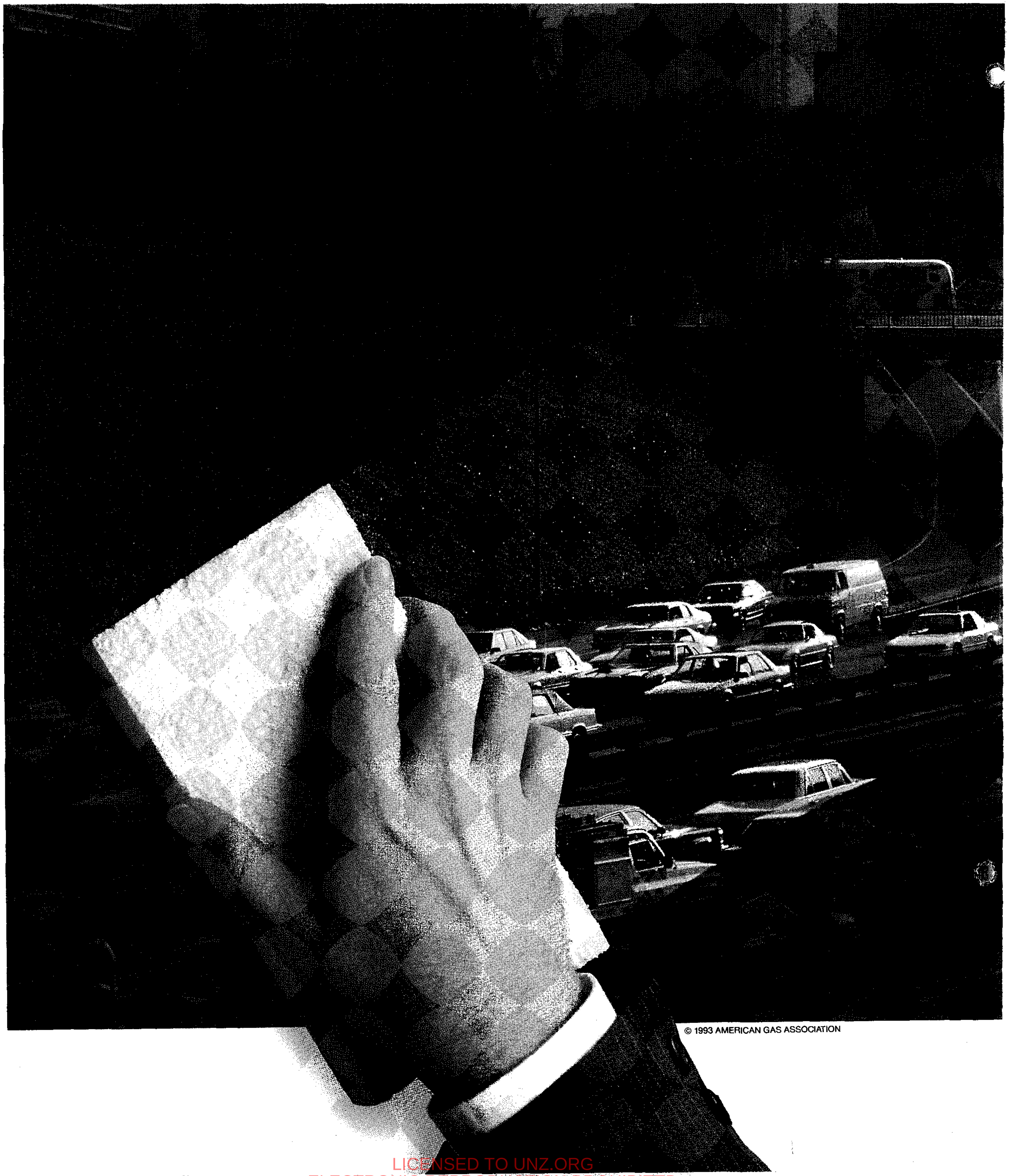
James Richman—The harpsichordist completes his traversal of Bach's "Well-Tempered Clavier," Book II. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. May 19 at 8.)

Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio—Performing piano trios by Mozart (in C Major, K. 548), Beethoven (the "Archduke"), and Rebecca Clarke, as well as a transcription by Arvo Pärt of the Adagio from Mozart's F-Major Piano Sonata (K. 280). (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. May 19 at 8.)



The New York Philharmonic plays Ives and Beethoven.

MICHAEL WITTE



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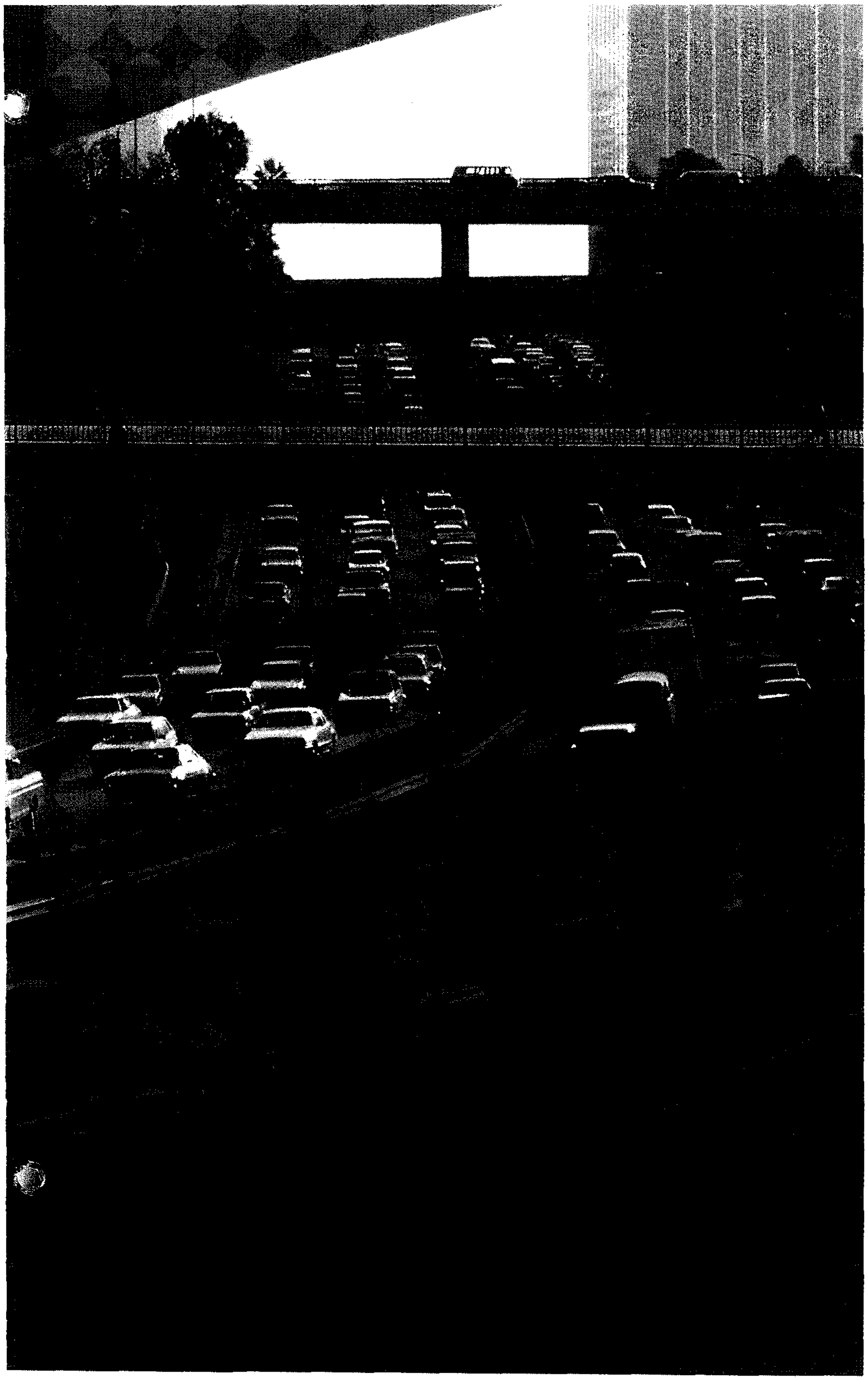
Don't you wish we could just do this to air pollution.



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"Country Takes Manhattan": Willie Nelson at Radio City.

JARRETT HUDDLESTON

Jue Yao—In her New York début recital, the violinist will play sonatas by Villa-Lobos (his "Sonata-Fantasia No. 1"), Beethoven (his Seventh), and Debussy, in addition to pieces by Paganini (via Kreisler) and Chen Gang; with pianist Robert Koenig. (Weill Recital Hall. May 19 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Presenting Respighi's Violin Sonata and piano trios by Haydn and Schumann (in G Minor). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. May 20 at 7:30 and May 23 at 4.)

Composers' Forum—Presenting works by Tania Leon and James Tenney. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. May 20 at 8. For information about tickets, call 334-0216.)

Anonymous 4—The women's vocal quartet is joined by four gentlemen singers and two sackbuttists to explore music written for the papal chapels of Martin V and Eugenius IV between 1420 and 1433, including a composite Mass and a Vespers. All the music (except for a motet by Arnold de Lantins) comes from Guillaume Dufay, who joined the papal choir in 1428 (his first pay slip came through on Dec. 20 of that year, just in time for Christmas shopping). The concert includes his isorhythmic motet "Balsamus et Munda," which was premièred on April 7, 1431, during the first Easter-week officiations of Eugenius IV, whose coronation had occurred less than a month earlier. Though it's a long way from twentieth-century New York to fifteenth-century Rome, the Big Apple plays a musical role in this program: the proper chants interspersed among Dufay's polyphonic Mass movements were copied out by ensemble member Susan Hellauer from a Roman manuscript in the Morgan Library. (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. May 21 at 8. For information about tickets, call 781-7737.)

Mark Steinberg and Marija Stroke—The violinist and the pianist perform sonatas by Beethoven (his Third) and Janáček, on a program that also includes works by Bach, Charles Wuorinen, and Bruce Adolphe (a première). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. May 22 at 2:30.)

Music at the Institute—Presenting chamber music for strings by Tartini, Rossini, and Alessandro Rolla, as well as Schubert's "Trout" Quintet (in which pianist Yevgeny Kissin will assist). (Ukrainian Institute, 2 E. 79th St. 288-8660. May 22 at 8.)

Cascade String Quartet—Performing quartets by Haydn (in E-Flat Major, Op. 64, No. 6), Beethoven (in A Major, Op. 18, No. 5), and Barber. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. May 23 at 2. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

Sergiu Schwartz—Violinist, playing sonatas by Debussy, Grieg (his Third), and Bloch (his Second), as well as short pieces by Smetana and Tobias Picker. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. May 23 at 3.)

Sachiko Hasegawa—Pianist, performing three Bach-Busoni chorale preludes, four Schubert Impromptus (D. 935), Prokofiev's Sonata No. 8, and the première of Shin-Ichiro Ikebe's "Chansonnier Cordiforme." (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. May 23 at 3.)

Woodhill Players—The wind-and-piano sextet performs chamber music by Roussel, Ibert, Mozart, and others. (Grace Episcopal Church, 254 Hicks St., at Grace Ct., Brooklyn Heights. May 23 at 4. Admission by contribution.)

New York Camerata—Presenting Beethoven's "Kakadu" Variations, Shostakovich's "Seven Romances on Poems of Alexander Blok," and Rorem's Trio for Flute, Cello, and Piano, among other works. (St. John's in the Village, 218 W. 11th St., at Waverly Pl. May 23 at 5. Admission by contribution.)

Eric Grossman and Ilan Rechtman—The violinist and the pianist continue their four-Sunday survey of Beethoven's violin sonatas by performing Sonatas No. 4, No. 5 (the "Spring"), and No. 6. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. May 23 at 6. No tickets necessary.)

Bethany Beardslee-Winham—Though she acquired the Winham surname thirty-seven years ago, music lovers know this soprano by her maiden name, under which she has been championing contemporary vocal music since the forties. In this recital she and pianist Diane Walsh will offer songs by Marjorie Merryman, Nikos Skalkottas, Susan Forrest Harding, and Meir Serrouya, including several premières. Presented by the Guild of Composers. (Weill Recital Hall. May 23 at 8.)

New York Cornet & Sacbut Ensemble—Performing sixteenth- and seventeenth-century music from England and Italy. (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. May 24 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Chamber Music Workshop—Any reckoning of the chamber-music repertoire will place the extensive contributions of Beethoven and Brahms high on the list. Promising young performers from throughout the country are coming to the end of a two-week stint at Carnegie Hall exploring the sonatas, trios, and quartets by these two of the Three B's, guided by a faculty that includes violinist Isaac Stern, the Kalichstein-Laredo-Rose Trio, and members of the Guarneri Quartet. The musically curious are invited to eavesdrop on selected daytime coaching sessions on May 25-27. (Various spaces within Carnegie Hall. For schedule and ticket information, call 903-9670.)

"Bang on a Can Festival"—This year's week-long exploration of the latest and the hippest opens with an evening of political songs, by thirty-odd composers, performed by Bermuda Triangle (a soprano, double bass, and piano trio). (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. May 25 at 8:15. Through May 30.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

"Country Takes Manhattan"—The urban hootenanny continues. **CLINT BLACK** and **WYNONNA:** Local country fans have been hip to Clint Black ever since he opened for K. T. Oslin four years ago at Carnegie Hall. The dark, handsome Houston native has an easy, laconic way with a song. As for Ms. Judd, she is doing *very* well on her own. Her first solo record went platinum in five days last year, and her immensely likable followup, "Tell Me Why," has similar prospects. Although she could loosen up a bit in concert, Wynonna has lots of talent, and her voice is so warm and rich you could roll it up and smoke it. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. May 18-19 at 8.) . . . **TRAVIS TRITT** and **TRISHA YEARWOOD:** If you were raised on rock but feel like giving Nashville a try, this is your night. Tritt is as close as you can get to Southern boogie-rock and still be country. He's a boisterous and hardworking bard of the blue-collar man. Trisha Yearwood is another red-hot crossover ace with a country heart. Also with Little Texas. (Radio City Music Hall. May 21 at 8.) . . . **WILLIE NELSON:** Whether cashing in on popular schlocky singles ("To All the Girls I've Loved Before"), garnering critical acclaim ("Stardust"), paying off a multimillion-dollar tax penalty ("Who'll Buy My Memories?: The I.R.S. Tapes"), or hawking burritos for Taco Bell, Willie just keeps on being Willie. At age sixty, he's still lithe and grizzled in his trademark jeans, running shoes, and bandanna. His approach to both his career and his music is relaxed and generous. "Across the Borderline," his latest album, is no different, but it's been quite a while since he's been this sensational. He is just as effective doing a duet with Sinéad O'Connor as he is covering a Willie Dixon song; there doesn't appear to be a borderline he won't cross. He adapts to individual songs and shows them off—as well as his partners on duets—to great advantage. The songs on the album don't hang together, but the variety should serve him well in this concert. John Anderson and Asleep at the Wheel are also on the bill. (Radio City Music Hall. May 22 at 8.) . . . **THE HIGHWAYMEN:** Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Johnny Cash, and Kris Kristofferson—Mt. Rushmore with a soundtrack. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. May 23 at 3. For information about tickets, call 247-4777.)

Rick Wakeman—A hero from the Dungeons & Dragons days of "progressive rock," Wakeman made his mark as the keyboardist for Yes, specializing in flowing capes and synthesizer histrionics. After punk hijacked the seventies, Wakeman paid the rent with the odd film score. Now he's back, to perform the moldy oldies and promote a forthcoming album. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. May 19 at 8.)

Living Colour—After listening to Living Colour's new release, "Stain," a question arises: how could a group with such a talented rhythm section—drummer Will Calhoun and former Tackhead bassist Doug Wimbish—produce such leaden rock? It is tempting to blame the vocals of Corey Glover (David Lee Roth without a sense of humor), but mediocre caterwaulers have fronted some great rock. No, blame guitarist-songwriter Vernon Reid. After three studio albums, his tunes still sound more like cold equations than music: they may be well thought out, but they don't flow. So far, the lone exception to Living Colour's calculated sterility was their 1991 EP, "Biscuits," which included live tracks and covers. "Biscuits" showed a loose, confident band jamming with impressive authority—everything a rock group is supposed to be. Perhaps that spirit will enliven this show, but don't count on it. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. May 22 at 8.)

Klezmer Concerts—Klezmer practically died—and, to tell the truth, few would have mourned the passing of the tired bar-mitzvah run-throughs to which the art had descended—but recently the grandchildren got interested, and all of a sudden the infectious tunes of the shtetl are ringing forth with renewed vigor. Call it Jewish jazz. On May 23, you could make a day of it. At 12:30: A workshop on the life and music of Dave Tarras, the clarinettist, composer, and bandleader who, having arrived here in 1921 from Ukraine, helped define New York and borscht-circuit klezmer style in the thirties and forties. . . . At 2: A tribute to Tarras, featuring three Brooklyn-based bands that illuminate different styles of klezmer—Klezmer Plus, Kapelye, and the Original Klezmer Jazz Band. (Both of the above will be held at the Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 1-718 951-4500.). . . ¶ At 8: The West End Klezmorim, a swinging sextet that includes singer Mary Feinsinger and clarinettist Harold Seletsky (the Prez of Klez). (Brotherhood Synagogue, 28 Gramercy Park S. For ticket information, call 674-5750.)

Horace Tapscott—Alternative Museum, 594 Broadway. 966-4444. May 19 at 8.

Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir—Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6741. May 19 at 8.

Tributes to Arthur Russell—Two salutes to the late cellist, vocalist, and composer. (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. May 19-20 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

Ravi Shankar—Assisted by Zakir Hussain, Swapan Chaudhuri, and Kartik Seshadri. (Carnegie Hall. 247-4777. May 21 at 8.)

Benefit Concert—The Roches, plus the Hudson Shad (performing music from their show "In the Time of the Comedian Harmonists"). (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. May 21 at 7.)

Tibetan Arts—Nawang Khechog plays traditional Tibetan flute music, and Venerable Lobsang Samten, a Tibetan monk, demonstrates sand painting. (Brooklyn Public Library, Grand Army Plaza. May 22 at 1:30. No tickets necessary.)

Caifanes—With Maldita Vecinidad. (Academy, 234 W. 43rd St. 307-7171. May 21 at 8.)

Houston Person and Etta Jones—Schomburg Center, 515 Lenox Ave., at 135th St. 491-2206. May 24 at 7.

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Yankees—Vs. the Baltimore Orioles, May 24-25 at 7:30.

Mets—Vs. the Pittsburgh Pirates, May 19 at 7:40. . . . ¶ Vs. the Atlanta Braves, May 21 at 7:40, May 22 at 1:05, and May 23 at 1:40

CHAMPIONSHIPS—BASKETBALL AND HOCKEY

Knicks—If they squash the Hornets, the Knicks face the Cleveland Cavaliers or Michael Jordan and the Chicago Bulls.

You're Unbelievable—At press time, the Islanders were still alive. If they beat the Penguins, they'll welcome the Montreal Canadiens, May 20 and May 22 at 7:30.

(The Yankees play at Yankee Stadium, 1-718 293-6000; the Mets at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499; the Knicks at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Paper Work—Several paper-related arts organizations will be hosts of "The Paper Chase," which starts with demonstrations of papermaking and bookbinding at Kate's Paperie, 561 Broadway, at Prince St. Visitors may then tour the nearby Dieu Donné Papermill and view exhibitions and demonstrations at the Center for Book Arts, the Camera Club of New York, and the Manhattan Graphics Center. (May 22, from 11 to 5, and May 23, from 12 to 4. For more information, call 226-0573.)

Go for the Green—Given Prospect Park's week-end-long celebration on May 22-23, which includes everything from an early-morning bird walk to ballroom dancing, few would argue with the slogan "You Gotta Have Park!" Volunteers will help clean up the park in the midst of the hoopla (mostly free), which will consist of concert and dance performances, a regatta of unusual boats, an equestrian fair, the opening of the carrousel, in-line skating demonstrations and workshops, the Harry Murphy Memorial running race, walking tours, and sheep-shearing demonstrations. For schedule information, call 1-718 788-0055. To volunteer, call 1-718 965-8960. (Similar events are planned for the same weekend at Central Park, 360-2752; Flushing Meadows Corona Park, 1-718 760-6562; and Van Cortlandt and Pelham Bay Parks, 1-718 430-1890.)

The Art of Oe—One of Japan's living treasures, Kenzaburo Oe, will give a talk titled "Japan, the Dubious and Myself." (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571. May 25 at 6.)

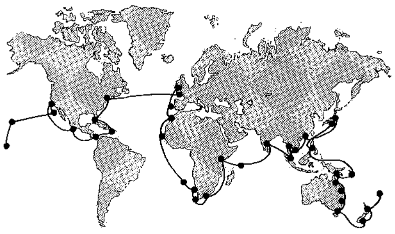
Drums Along the Hudson—The percussion section of the musical group AsaDife is offering a workshop in African-influenced traditional Dominican music, including sarandunga, congo, and gaga. The lecture and demonstration will culminate in a performance of songs and chants. (Inter-Cultural Resource Center, 523 W. 113th St. May 21, from 6:30 to 9:30. For more information, call 226-7171.)

Readings—May 19 at 6:30: Robert Creeley and David Foster Wallace, among others, will read their own work from the literary magazine *Conjunctions 20: Unfinished Business.* (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 420 West Broadway. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ May 19 at 7: Toi Derricotte, Cornelius Eady, Marie Howe, and Thomas Lux will read their own poems from a new anthology, "More Light: Father and Daughter Poems." (Poetry Society of America, 15 Gramercy Park S. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.). . . ¶ May 20 at 8: Dale Peck will read from his novel "Martin and John." (A Different Light, 548 Hudson St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ May 22 at 8: Muriel Spark will read from her autobiography, "Curriculum Vitae." (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.). . . ¶ May 24 at 7: Isabel Allende will read from her new novel, "The Infinite Plan." (Endicott Booksellers, 450 Columbus Ave., at 81st St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶May 25 at 7: Robert Olen Butler will read from his collection of short stories "Good Scent from a Strange Mountain," which won a Pulitzer Prize this year. (Brentano's, Fifth Ave. at 48th St. No tickets necessary.)

Talk—Leon Botstein, conductor of the American Symphony Orchestra, Peter Schickele, of P. D. Q. Bach fame, and composer Libby Larsen will tackle the topic "Inventing, Again, the Concert." (Bruno Walter Auditorium, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center. 870-1671. May 20 at 6:30.)

Walks & Tours—May 22-23 at 1: The American Museum of Natural History is sponsoring a short walk that will give participants an idea of the relative size of the planets. For more information, call 769-5566. . . . ¶ May 23 at 1: Rebellious Greenwich Village; sponsored by Radical Walking Tours. For more information, call 1-718 492-0069.

QUEEN ELIZABETH 2
1994 WORLD CRUISE



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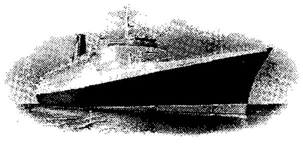

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W31

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			19	20	21	22
23	24	25				

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 25.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Map of the Human Heart" (†).
Theatre 2: "Much Ado About Nothing" (†).
Theatre 3: Through May 20: "Léolo" (directed by Jean-Claude Lauzon, in French). From May 21: "Sofie" (Liv Ullmann; in Danish).
Theatre 4: "Strictly Ballroom" (†).
Theatre 5: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).
Theatre 6: "Much Ado About Nothing" (†).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through May 20: "The Beekeeper" (1986, Theo Angelopoulos; in Greek).
From May 21: "My Private War" (1990, Harriet Eder and Thomas Kufus; in German).

Newman Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
"The Searchers" (1956, John Ford), with John Wayne, Ward Bond, Vera Miles, Natalie Wood, and Jeffrey Hunter.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Dave" (†).
Theatre 2: Through May 20: "The Crying Game" (Neil Jordan). From May 21: "Hot Shots! Part Deux" (Jim Abrahams), with Charlie Sheen.
Theatre 3: Through May 20: "Dave" (†). From May 21: "Hot Shots! Part Deux."

Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "Three of Hearts" (Yurek Bogayevicz).
Theatre 2: "This Boy's Life" (Michael Caton-Jones), with Robert De Niro.
Theatre 3: "Indecent Proposal" (†).
Theatre 4: "Nemesis" (Albert Pyun).
Theatre 5: Through May 20: The 1993 Human Rights Watch Film Festival. From May 21: "Sliver" (Phillip Noyce), with Sharon Stone, William Baldwin, and Tom Berenger.
Theatre 6: "The Night We Never Met" (Warren Leight).
Theatre 7: Through May 20: The 1993 Human Rights Watch Film Festival. From May 21: To be announced.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
May 19: "Once Upon a Time in China" (1991, Tsui Hark) and "Swordsman II" (1992, Ching Siu-tung).
May 20: "A Chinese Ghost Story III" (1991, Ching Siu-tung); and "The Peacock King" (1984, Nam Nai-choi).
May 21: "Au Revoir, Mon Amour" (1991, Tony Au) and "Dragon Gate Inn" (1992, Raymond Lee).
May 22: "Once a Thief" (1992, John Woo) and "Hard Boiled" (1992, Woo).
May 23: "Police Story II" (1988, Jackie Chan), with Chan; and "Operation Condor: Armour of God II" (1991, Chan), with Chan.
May 24: "Once Upon a Time in China" and "Swordsman II."
May 25: "Rouge" (1988, Stanley Kwan); and "Actress" (1992, Kwan).

William Baldwin and Sharon Stone in "Sliver."

DAVE MCKEAN

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "Howards End" (James Ivory).
Theatre 2: "American Heart" (Martin Bell), with Jeff Bridges and Edward Furlong.
Theatre 3: "Who's the Man?" (†).
Theatre 4: "Claire of the Moon" (Nicole Conn).
Theatre 5: "Joey Breaker" (Steven Starr).
Theatre 6: "Brother's Keeper" (Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky), a documentary.
Theatre 7: "Wide Sargasso Sea" (†).

19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Nemesis" (Albert Pyun).
Theatre 2: "Lost in Yonkers" (Martha Coolidge).
Theatre 3: "Lost in Yonkers."
Theatre 4: "Indecent Proposal" (†).
Theatre 5: "Unforgiven" (Clint Eastwood).
Theatre 6: "Posse" (Mario Van Peebles).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story" (†).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "Benny & Joon" (†).
Theatre 2: "Posse" (Mario Van Peebles).
Theatre 3: "Lost in Yonkers" (Martha Coolidge).
Theatre 4: "Three of Hearts" (Yurek Bogayevicz).

34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Indecent Proposal" (†).
Theatre 2: "Boiling Point" (†).
Theatre 3: Through May 20: "The Dark Half" (†). From May 21: "Sliver" (Phillip Noyce), with Sharon Stone, William Baldwin, and Tom Berenger.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
Through May 20: "Nemesis" (Albert Pyun).
From May 21: "Hot Shots! Part Deux" (Jim Abrahams), with Charlie Sheen.

Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).

Sutton I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "The Crying Game" (Neil Jordan).
Theatre 2: "Indian Summer" (Mike Binder).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
Through May 20: "Howards End" (James Ivory).
From May 21: "Hot Shots! Part Deux" (Jim Abrahams), with Charlie Sheen.

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Splitting Heirs" (Robert Young).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story" (†).
Theatre 2: "Posse" (Mario Van Peebles).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Nemesis" (Albert Pyun).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Lost in Yonkers" (Martha Coolidge).
Theatre 2: "Lost in Yonkers."

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "American Heart" (Martin Bell), with Jeff Bridges.
Theatre 2: "Three of Hearts" (Yurek Bogayevicz).
Theatre 3: "Wide Sargasso Sea" (†).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "Strictly Ballroom" (†).
Theatre 2: "Much Ado About Nothing" (†).
Theatre 3: "Map of the Human Heart" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Night We Never Met" (Warren Leight).
Theatre 5: "Much Ado About Nothing" (†).
Theatre 6: "Scent of a Woman" (Martin Brest), with Al Pacino.

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Point of No Return" (John Badham), with Bridget Fonda.
Theatre 2: "Sidekicks" (Aaron Norris), with Chuck Norris.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Benny & Joon" (†).

New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: May 19: "This Boy's Life" (Michael Caton-Jones), with Robert De Niro. May 20: Theatre closed. From May 21: "Sliver" (Phillip Noyce), with Sharon Stone, William Baldwin, and Tom Berenger.
Theatre 2: "Indecent Proposal" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Herman" (Erik Gustavson, in Norwegian).

Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Dave" (†).

East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Indecent Proposal" (†).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story" (†).
Theatre 2: "Lost in Yonkers" (Martha Coolidge).

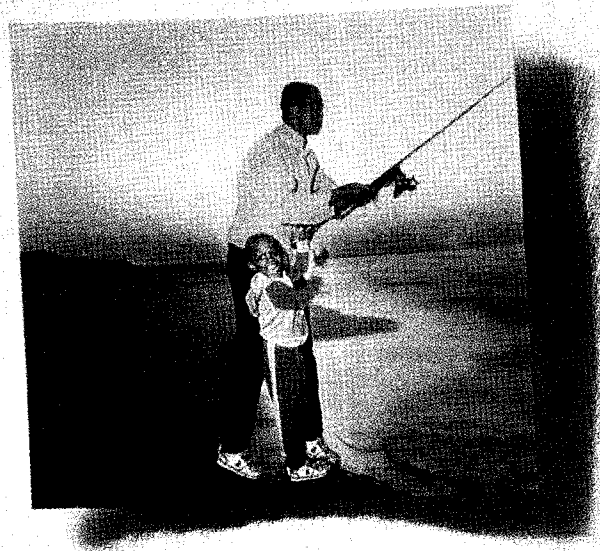
Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "Dave" (†).
Theatre 2: "Who's the Man?" (†).
Theatre 3: "Strictly Ballroom" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Night We Never Met" (Warren Leight).
Theatre 5: "Posse" (Mario Van Peebles).
Theatre 6: Through May 20: "Sidekicks" (Aaron Norris). From May 21: "Sliver" (Phillip Noyce), with Sharon Stone and William Baldwin.
Theatre 7: "Nemesis" (Albert Pyun).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "El Mariachi" (†).
Theatre 2: "Benny & Joon" (†).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: "Time Indefinite" (directed by Ross McElwee).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "Visions of Light: The Art of Cinematography" (†).

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Benny & Joon" (†).
Theatre 2: "Lost in Yonkers" (Martha Coolidge).



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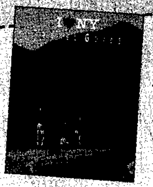

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MOVIE HOUSES-Cont'd

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story" (†).
Theatre 2: "Posse" (Mario Van Peebles).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Man Bites Dog" (†).
Theatre 2: "Olivier Olivier" (Agnieszka Holland; in French).
Theatre 3: "For a Lost Soldier" (Roeland Kerbosch, in Dutch).
Theatre 4: "Okoge" (Takehiro Nakajima, in Japanese).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: Through May 20: "Three of Hearts" (Yurek Bogayevicz). From May 21: "Sliver" (Phillip Noyce), with Sharon Stone, William Baldwin, and Tom Berenger.
Theatre 2: "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story" (†).
Theatre 3: "Dave" (†).
Theatre 4: "Benny & Joon" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Crying Game" (Neil Jordan).
Theatre 6: "The Dark Half" (†).
Theatre 7: "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story" (†).
Theatre 8: "Dave" (†).
Theatre 9: Through May 20: "The Night We Never Met" (Warren Leight). From May 21: "Hot Shots! Part Deux" (Jim Abrahams), with Charlie Sheen.

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Indian Summer" (Mike Binder).
Theatre 2: "Boiling Point" (†).
Theatre 3: "Splitting Heirs" (Robert Young).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"My Neighbor Totoro," an animated film.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "The Night We Never Met" (Warren Leight).
Theatre 2: "Howards End" (James Ivory).
Theatre 3: "Benny & Joon" (†).
Theatre 4: "Splitting Heirs" (Robert Young).
Theatre 5: "Sidekicks" (Aaron Norris), with Chuck Norris.
Theatre 6: "Léolo" (Jean-Claude Lauzon, in French).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Lost in Yonkers" (Martha Coolidge).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Unforgiven" (Clint Eastwood).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"American Heart" (Martin Bell), with Jeff Bridges and Edward Furlong.

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).
Theatre 2: "Joey Breaker" (Steven Starr).

Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th. (586-1900)
Through May 20: "El Mariachi" (†).
From May 21: "Sofie" (Liv Ullmann; in Danish), with Erland Josephson.

Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"The Lover" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Strictly Ballroom" (†).

Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Dave" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
Through May 20: "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story" (†).
From May 21: "Hot Shots! Part Deux" (Jim Abrahams), with Charlie Sheen.

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Much Ado About Nothing" (†).
Theatre 2: "Indochine" (†).
Theatre 3: "Much Ado About Nothing" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Story of Qiu Ju" (Zhang Yimou; in Mandarin).
Theatre 5: "Much Ado About Nothing" (†).
Theatre 6: "Stolen Children" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Scent of a Woman" (Martin Brest), with Al Pacino.

84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Lost in Yonkers" (Martha Coolidge).
Theatre 2: "Bound by Honor" (Taylor Hackford).
Theatre 3: "Indecent Proposal" (†).
Theatre 4: "Wide Sargasso Sea" (†).
Theatre 5: Through May 20: "Three of Hearts" (Yurek Bogayevicz), with William Baldwin, Kelly Lynch, and Sherilyn Fenn. From May 21: "Sliver" (Phillip Noyce), with Sharon Stone, William Baldwin, and Tom Berenger.
Theatre 6: "Map of the Human Heart" (†).

Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Benny & Joon" (†).
Theatre 2: "Nemesis" (Albert Pyun).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "The Night We Never Met" (Warren Leight), with Matthew Broderick, Annabella Sciorra, and Kevin Anderson.
Theatre 2: "Posse" (Mario Van Peebles).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Point of No Return" (directed by John Badham), with Bridget Fonda.
Theatre 2: "Boiling Point" (†).
Theatre 3: "Who's the Man?" (†).
Theatre 4: "Nemesis" (Albert Pyun).
Theatre 5: "Posse" (Mario Van Peebles).
Theatre 6: "The Crying Game" (Neil Jordan).
Theatre 7: "Posse."

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"Bound by Honor" (Taylor Hackford).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "The Adventures of Huck Finn" (Stephen Sommers), with Elijah Wood and Courtney B. Vance.
Theatre 2: Through May 20: "Just Another Girl on the I.R.T" (Leslie Harris). From May 21: "Indecent Proposal" (†).
Theatre 3: "Aladdin," an ainmated film.

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
Through May 20: "Indecent Proposal" (†).
From May 21: "Sliver" (Phillip Noyce), with Sharon Stone, William Baldwin, and Tom Berenger.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: Through May 20: "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story" (†). From May 21: "Hot Shots! Part Deux" (Jim Abrahams), with Charlie Sheen.
Theatre 2: "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
May 19: "The Cat's Paw" (1934, directed by Sam Taylor; silent), with Harold Lloyd.
May 20-21: "A Sailor-Made Man" (1921, silent), with Harold Lloyd; and "Professor Beward" (1938, Elliott Nugent), with Lloyd.
May 22-25: "Grandma's Boy" (1922, Fred Newmeyer), with Harold Lloyd; and "For Heaven's Sake" (1926, Sam Taylor; silent), with Lloyd.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
Through May 22: "Sabrina" (1954, Billy Wilder) and "Breakfast at Tiffany's" (1961, Blake Edwards), both with Audrey Hepburn.
May 23-25: "Love in the Afternoon" (1957, Billy Wilder), with Audrey Hepburn; and "The Lavender Hill Mob" (†).

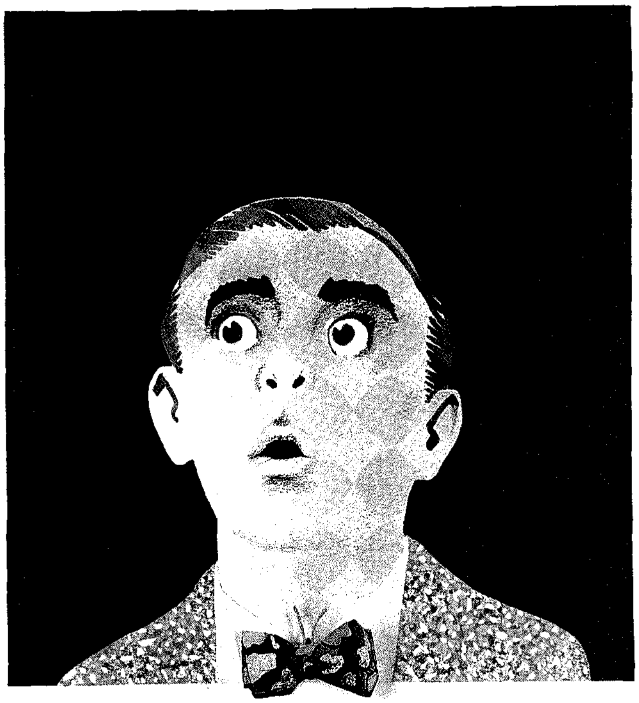
Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
May 19: "Monty Python's The Meaning of Life" (1983, Terry Jones); and "Time Bandits" (1981, Terry Gilliam).
May 20: "Johnny Belinda" (†); and "The Glass Menagerie" (1950, Irving Rapper), with Jane Wyman, Kirk Douglas, Gertrude Lawrence, and Arthur Kennedy.
May 21-22: "Lolita" (1962, Stanley Kubrick), with Sue Lyon, James Mason, Peter Sellers, and Shelley Winters; and "Killer's Kiss" (1955, Kubrick), with Frank Silvera.
May 23: "Duck Soup" (1933, Leo McCarey) and "Monkey Business" (1931, Norman McLeod), both with the Marx Brothers.
May 24: "Los Olvidados" ("The Young and the Damned"; 1950, Luis Buñuel; a Mexican film, in Spanish); and "Viridiana" (1961, Buñuel; in Spanish).
May 25: "Interiors" (1978, Woody Allen), with Diane Keaton; and "Love and Death" (1975, Allen), with Allen and Keaton.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—May 20-21 at 2:30 and 6, May 22-23 at 2 and 5, and May 24-25 at 2:30 and 6: A series of Greek films. . . . ¶ May 20 at 3 and 6: "Split" (1992, Ellen Fisher Turk and Andrew Weeks). . . . ¶ May 21 at 3 and 6, May 22 at 5, and May 24 at 3: Two different programs of four short French films. . . . ¶ May 22 at 2:30 and May 23 at 5: "The Yellow Cruise" (1933, Léon Poirier and André Sauvage; in French). . . . ¶ May 23 at 2:30: "Humain, Trop Humain" (1972, Louis Malle; in French). . . . ¶ May 24 at 6:30: "Ocean Beat" (1990, Andrej Zdravic).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—May 19 at 2, 6, and 10 and May 20 at 4 and 8: "The Lady Vanishes" (1938, Alfred Hitchcock), with Dame May Whitty, Margaret Lockwood, Michael Redgrave, Paul Lukas, and Cecil Parker. . . . ¶ May 19 at 4 and 8 and May 20 at 2, 6, and 10: "Jamaica Inn" (†). . . . ¶ May 21 at 2, 6, and 10 and May 22 at 4 and 8: "Shadows" (†). . . . ¶ May 21 at 4 and 8 and May 22 at 6 and 10: "Who's That Knocking at My Door?" (see page 25). . . . ¶ May 23 at 4 and 8, May 24 at 3:30 and 8, and May 25 at 2: "Boxcar Bertha" (1972, Martin Scorsese), with Barbara Hershey and David Carradine. . . . ¶ May 23 at 6, May 24 at 2, 5:45, and 9:15, and May 25 at 3:45: "Guns Don't Argue" (1957, Bill Karn and Richard C. Kahn).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—"What Made Pistachio Nuts? Early Sound Comedy and the Vaudeville Tradition." May 22-23 at 2: "Whoopee" (1930, Thornton Freeland), with Eddie Cantor. . . . ¶ May 22-23 at 4: "Palmy Days" (1931, Edward Sutherland), with Cantor, George Raft, and Charolette Greenwood.



At the American Museum of the Moving Image, two Eddie Cantor films.

PAULO GUIDOTTI

MOVIES IN BRIEF

SEE PRECEDING PAGES FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS. IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

Staking a Claim

MARTIN SCORSESE'S 1969 début, "Who's That Knocking at My Door?" (playing May 21-22, at the Walter Reade Theatre), has just the slightest bit of story line, about the certifiable Madonna-whore complex of a New York Italian layabout (Harvey Keitel). But the movie is a fascinating portfolio piece: a black-and-white blueprint for "Mean Streets." Keitel plays one of Scorsese's Little Italy guys—he's an ex-bank teller between jobs, who spends time going to movies or carousing and roughhousing with fellow-idlers. When he strikes up a conversation with a pretty, educated blonde (Zina Bethune), who's looking at *Paris Match*, it's as if he were making contact with another universe. Later, he can't connect with her sexually or handle a secret from her past, because he sees her as a nice girl. Youthful and trim, Keitel gives a supple performance. Too bad Scorsese defines the character's conflicts so blatantly and symbolically—the ruling icon in the anti-hero's home is a statuette of Madonna and Child. The film is loaded with talent (Michael Wadleigh was one of the cinematographers, Thelma Schoonmaker did the editing), and the sequences of sordid boys'-nights-out are peerless. This movie allows you to gauge the arc of much of Scorsese's career—from mining Italian-American material here, to refining it in "Mean Streets" and "Raging Bull," to strip-mining it in "GoodFellas."

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

BENNY & JOON—This is billed as an offbeat love story, but that's too kind: it misses the beat altogether. Benny Pearl (Aidan Quinn) is an auto mechanic who spends most of his time looking after his sister Joon (Mary Stuart Masterson). She's a bit crazy, although any real madness is kept strictly within the cute limits set by the director, Jeremiah Chechik. There's nothing dangerous or even disquieting about her, just an excess of creative ability and the urge to wear a swimming mask and snorkel in public. But one eccentric isn't enough for this movie. Enter Sam (Johnny Depp), a hopeless case with a taste for clowning and magic who finds a kindred spirit in Joon. "He's sweeter than he is judgmental," she murmurs, which says it all. They fall in love, and stroll past a couple of upsets toward a happy ending. It's one long shower of whimsy, much of it borrowed from elsewhere; when Depp does a little dance with two bread rolls, everyone around him grins with delight, as if they never saw Chaplin doing the same thing. Quinn struggles to give the film some dignity, but he can't do anything about Barry Berman's script. "You're blessed," he tells Depp. "You could be the new Buster Keaton." If that kind of heresy doesn't make you weep, nothing will.—A.L. (Murray Hill Cinemas, Beekman, 86th Street East Twin, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, and Metro Cinema.)

BOILING POINT—An overdressed stiff. The writer-director, James B. Harris, drapes the thin plot of "Money Men," Gerald Petievich's 1981 novel about funny-money scams, with forties nostalgia and film-noir existentialism. Petievich's con-man catalyst becomes a Dapper Dan who loves the Big Band era. Harris wastes his energy drawing parallels between this retro villain (Dennis Hopper) and the contemporary hero (Wesley Snipes), a T-man who likewise feels that his world is crumbling. The weird dreaminess and forced analogies slow the movie down. The resulting torpor swallows up the capable Snipes and the colorful Hopper, along with Lolita Davidovich, Seymour Cassel, Valerie Perrine, Jonathan Banks, Tony Lo Bianco, Viggo Mortensen, and Dan Hedaya.—M.S. (34th Street Showplace, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Criterion Center.)

THE DARK HALF—Thad Beaumont (Timothy Hutton), the writer hero of George A. Romero's terrific new horror film (based on a Stephen King novel), believes that the creative process involves recognizing the lawless, instinct-driven unconscious, and then surrendering to it. "Let it party. Give it the car keys and let it ride," he says. Thad releases his instincts in the form of nasty, violent thrillers written under the pseudonym George Stark; one day, his literary alter ego comes to life, and that's when the fun (for the audience) begins. King and Romero give the mystery of the creative impulse a thorough airing—take it for a long, recklessly speedy ride, with the top down the whole time. Hutton—an underrated actor—plays Stark, too, and he attacks his juicy dual role greedily. He makes a great grinning psycho; he gives the villain a perverse, Elvis-like charm. Stark's murders are brilliantly staged by Romero, whose work in this picture is his sharpest and most inventive since "Dawn of the Dead" (1979). The picture zooms from exposition to climax with a crazy, headlong momentum that's fuelled by the entertainers' conviction that the low road they're travelling is really the best—the most direct and the most scenic—way to get from here to there. Also with Amy Madigan, Michael Rooker, Julie Harris, and Robert Joy. Screenplay by Romero; cinematography by Tony Pierce-Roberts.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/3/93.) (Chelsea Cinemas. . . . ¶ 34th Street Showplace; through May 20.)

DAVE—Dave Kovic (Kevin Kline), the hero of Ivan Reitman's populist comedy, is a regular middle-class guy who happens to be a dead ringer for the President of the United States (also Kline). The screenplay, by Gary Ross, contrives to put Dave in the Oval Office, where he poses as the President and allows himself (initially) to be manipulated by the crafty White House chief of staff (Frank Langella). By the end of the picture, he has restored honesty and decency to the government, and has fallen in love with the First Lady (Sigourney Weaver). In the first half hour or so, the movie is hilarious, because its humor is mostly destructive; and Kline's performance as the real President is a chillingly funny portrait of Chief Executive as empty suit. But after the promisingly nasty beginning, the filmmakers settle into a sort of campaign mode, lulling and flattering the audience with a fairy-tale vision of the common man's victory over the Washington establishment. The movie's crowd-pleasing agenda inexorably saps its energy. Reitman and Ross are willing to sacrifice bite for across-the-board appeal, and they wind up with a political comedy that has no politics. Also with Charles Grodin, Ben Kingsley, and Kevin Dunn.—T.R. (5/17/93) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Tower East, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and Columbus Circle.)

DRAGON: THE BRUCE LEE STORY—Bruce Lee, a kung-fu master and star of the 1973 martial-arts extravaganza "Enter the Dragon," had the sort of physical skills that even the most gifted mimic couldn't do justice to. In Rob Cohen's biographical film, Jason Scott Lee (no relation) plays Bruce, and he does well enough in the picture's many spectacular fight scenes, yet the violent production numbers don't quite capture the excitement—the aesthetic thrill—of a performance by the real Bruce Lee. Even more damagingly, the movie doesn't answer, or even formulate, the most interesting questions about its subject's odd life and unlikely career. The filmmakers are evasive about the circumstances of Lee's sudden death, in 1973, at the age of thirty-two; and they never try to explain why this phenomenally talented artist chose to express himself through *combat*. They present Bruce, for the most part, as a sweet, even-tempered young man—just another optimistic kid chasing a dream of success. This is a speedy and fairly absorbing picture, but we're always aware that something is missing. Also with Lauren Holly, Michael Learned, Robert Wagner, and John Cheung (who staged the fight scenes). The screenplay, by Cohen, Edward Khmara, and John Raffo, is based on a memoir by Lee's widow.—T.R. (5/17/93) (Bay Cinema, Manhattan Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and National Twin. . . . ¶ 62nd & Broadway; through May 20.)

INDECENT PROPOSAL—The first and last scenes of this movie vaguely remind you of an old Claude Lelouch weepie—lovers looking wretched in a picturesque fog. Nothing in between is much clearer; this is a humorless, muddle-headed slog through familiar territory. David and Diana Murphy (Woody Harrelson and Demi Moore) are a young married couple, desperate for money, who vainly try their luck at the tables of Las Vegas. Enter John Gage (Robert Redford), who is so smitten by Diana that he offers her a million dollars for one night of love. That's the dilemma, but it never grips you; the director, Adrian Lyne, is bored by anything that smacks of moral complication, preferring to show us what a juicy, unflustered life you can enjoy with that kind of cash. The movie is hardly in a position to chastise Gage for his empty soul when its own style is one of numbing, desolate slickness. None of the performers is given a chance—Harrelson, previously so good in "White Men Can't Jump," looks embarrassed just to be here. And if it's sex you've come to see, don't bother: most of it was already in the trailer.—A.L. (4/26/93) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, New York Twin, East 85th Street, and 84th Street Six-plex. . . . ¶ Astor Plaza; through May 20. . . . ¶ Embassy; starting May 21.)

INDOCHINE—The director, Régis Wargnier, uses his star, Catherine Deneuve, largely for her classical, indomitable profile—the same attribute that made her the 1985 model for the French national symbol, "Marianne." Indeed, in this wannabe epic about the waning of French Indochina, Wargnier reduces all his actors and characters to symbols: Deneuve, as a French plantation owner who's lived in Indochina all her life and carries on the spirit of pioneer colonialism; lovely Linh Dan Pham, as Deneuve's adopted daughter, an Annamese princess who becomes a revolutionary leader; and blank Vincent Perez, as a confused French naval officer who wows both mother and child, sparking romance and rebellion. This monument-like picture lacks urgency and staying power—the material oxidizes onscreen. With vistas by cinematographer François Catonné that should increase the tourist traffic in Vietnam and Malaysia. In French.—M.S. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

IN BRIEF-Cont'd

Jamaica Inn (1939)—A forgettable, generally forgotten Hitchcock gothic, from a Daphne du Maurier novel, full of Cornwall ship-wrecks and smuggling and murder in the time of good King George IV. The picture is dominated by Charles Laughton (with a false beak) as an evil, bound-to-go-mad rake; his flamboyant ghoulishness appears to have paralyzed Hitchcock, whose staging of the wild flights from assassins, the midnight escapes, the prowlings up and down corridors, over roofs, through barnyards, and over moors is almost shockingly uninspired. With Maureen O'Hara, who is a very dim heroine here, Emlyn Williams enjoying himself playing a sinister scamp, and Leslie Banks, Robert Newton, and Marie Ney. The picture was produced (by Erich Pommer) on a large scale; the Regency costumes seem to overpower the performers and the inn is packed with crowds of actors impersonating violent, hard-drinking louts—Graham Greene said that they were "reminiscent of the noisier characters in Shakespeare acted at a girls' school." Written by Sidney Gilliat, Joan Harrison, and J. B. Priestley.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; May 19-20.)

Johnny Belinda (1948)—Jane Wyman, previously known as a giddy second-string blonde, surprised audiences with her touching performance as the brunette deaf-mute Belinda and won an Academy Award. The setting is an island off Nova Scotia, where a poor, proud farmer, appropriately named McDonald (Charles Bickford), lives with his acidulous sister (Agnes Moorehead) and his afflicted daughter, who is generally regarded as an idiot. Along comes a kindly young doctor (Lew Ayres), who teaches her sign language and encourages her to comb her hair, and she becomes presentable enough to attract a leering local bully (Stephen McNally, better known as Horace McNally), who rapes her. She has a baby—Johnny Belinda. This Jerry Wald production might have been as exasperating as the Broadway play by Elmer Harris that it's based on, but the director, Jean Negulesco, managed to provide an atmosphere in which the hokey, tearjerking elements are used for more than mere pathos—an example of technique over subject matter. With Jan Sterling as an unscrupulous tart, Rosalind Ivan, Dan Seymour (sometimes mistaken for Zero Mostel), and Mabel Paige. Cinematography by Ted McCord.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 20.)

THE RAILROAD

At the Walter Reade Theatre, Martin Scorsese's "Boxcar Bertha."

ROMAIN SLOCOMBE

The Lavender Hill Mob (1951)—As the prim, innocous civil servant with a hidden spark of nonconformity, Alec Guinness carries out a dream of larcenous glory: robbing the Bank of England. A man who steals three million in gold bullion may be permitted to coin a word: Guinness describes his gleaming-eyed, bowler-hatted little man as the "fubsy" type, and he's an image of Everyman. T. E. B. Clarke's script, Charles Crichton's direction, and Georges Auric's music contribute to what is probably the most nearly perfect fubsy comedy of all time. It's a minor classic, a charmer. Stanley Holloway is the genteel, artistic accomplice; Alfie Bass and Sidney James the professional assistants, and one of the beneficiaries of Guinness's wrongdoing is a bit player, Audrey Hepburn.—P.K. (Gramercy; May 23-25.)

The Lover—Jean-Jacques Annaud's version of Marguerite Duras's autobiographical novel, about her sexual coming of age in 1929 Saigon, is a singularly empty moviegoing experience. Annaud simply illustrates the love story of the Young Girl (Jane March) and the Chinese Man (Tony Leung), and uses Duras's narration (spoken by Jeanne Moreau) whenever he's absolutely pressed to articulate what's happening. As the Man proclaims his love and the Girl tries out her budding wiles on him, the film becomes a game of "She loves me, she loves me not." Although the stars expose their bodies with aplomb, Annaud stages their grappling so self-consciously that you tire of their flesh. Screenplay by Annaud and Gerard Brach.—M.S. (11/16/92) (Fine Arts.)

Man Bites Dog—With Rémy Belvaux, directed by Belvaux. In French. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Quad Cinema.)

Map of the Human Heart—A private epic from the New Zealand director Vincent Ward, who made "The Navigator." The new film moves across continents, languages, and elements—from icepacks to hellfire and back again. Avik is an Inuit, taken from the Arctic in 1930 by an R.A.F. mapmaker named Walter Russell (Patrick Bergin) and flown to Montreal to be treated for tuberculosis. Here he meets the young Albertine, and from then on the story charts his obsessive love for her, which reaches an unlikely climax on top of a wartime barrage balloon. That image, dreamy yet sharp, and so extravagant you almost want to laugh, is typical of Ward's work. He courageously pursues the instincts of his imagination, whatever the cost may be—and in this case the cost is high, since a tale stretching over thirty years needs a fierce narrative push that he cannot really muster. There is plenty that amazes, but the action tends to smother the actors; Jason Scott Lee and Anne Parillaud look dull and soporific in the leading roles, and even Patrick Bergin cannot do much with the blurred part of Russell. Still, the film is worth staying with for the bombing scenes, when Avik (now in the R.A.F. himself) witnesses the obliteration of a German city; few directors have such an unblinking eye for horror.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

El Mariachi—This first film by twenty-four-year-old Robert Rodriguez was made for seven thousand dollars, and part of its enormous charm is that it really looks like a seven-thousand-dollar movie. It's a grubby little thriller, set in a Mexican border town, about a wandering mariachi musician (Carlos Gallardo) who is mistaken for a killer. Rodriguez establishes a delirious pace, and keeps the bullets flying and the corpses crumpling for a brisk, and appropriately terse, eighty-two minutes. The movie has the sort of dry, bracingly unwholesome humor that relentless mayhem can produce if the characters are mean and abject enough and the storytelling is speedy and laconic. This young filmmaker is no visual wizard; he's just an energetic and imaginative manipulator of tried-and-true genre conventions. But if you enter his seedy world with expectations as low as the picture's aspirations, you'll probably have a very good time. Also with Reinol Martinez, Consuelo Gómez, and Peter Marquardt. In Spanish.—T.R. (2/22/93) (86th Street East Twin. . . . ¶ Angelika 57; through May 20.)

Much Ado About Nothing—On the sunny side of the Bard. Kenneth Branagh leads us through the tiffs and deceptions of Shakespeare's comedy, all shot in and around a Tuscan villa. As the opening credits roll, a team of hunks rides back from the wars, and a bevy of maidens heads for the showers in anticipation; both are seen in slow motion, which suggests that Branagh will not be paying much heed to the virtues of restraint. This is confirmed by most of the performances—Branagh and Emma Thompson as Benedick and Beatrice, splashing out with grand comic gestures, and a mangy Dogberry from an unintelligible Michael Keaton. The movie revels in masked balls, creamy costumes, and caramel tans, but all this jollity feels forced—it's more of a guided tour than a relaxed show of wit, and the camera stares into people's faces, waiting for a reaction, when it should be hanging back. What potency there is comes from the characters who refuse to be gripped by good cheer—Don John, played by Keanu Reeves as a pinup with malice, and Don Pedro, played by Denzel Washington, whose cool gravity shames the rest of the movie.—A.L. (5/10/93) (Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Shadows (1960)—John Cassavetes' favorite Cassavetes movie, and his first. Influenced in equal parts by New York acting classes and jazz, he invented a raw, jumpy, hip form of improvisational filmmaking. Hugh Hurd plays a bluesy musician who stoops to introducing a frowzy chorus line in a Philadelphia dive; Ben Carruthers is Hugh's kid brother, a post-adolescent loafer; Lelia Goldoni is their sister, a romantic loser who thinks life is eluding her. (The characters take the first names of the actors.) The three siblings are black, but Ben and Lelia can pass for white. Cassavetes' casualness about racial identities intensifies the moments when race erupts as an issue. The film's tragicomic centerpiece is Goldoni's extraordinary embodiment of passionate confusion. But her co-stars are memorable, too: Hurd gives doggedness a good name, and Rupert Crosse is wonderful as his agent-manager. The title refers to Ben and Lelia's racial conundrum, and to characters living in the shadows of people they hope or fear they might become. By concocting a plot to suit his multiracial group of actors, by placing it in a jazzy milieu, and by urging the actors to summon up the thoughts and feelings of art-minded New Yorkers in the fifties, Cassavetes captured the meaning of the phrase "identity crisis"—a phenomenon close to actors' hearts.—M.S. (Walter Reade Theatre; May 21-22.)

Stolen Children ("Il Ladro di Bambini")—Neo-neorealism about a decent young officer in the Carabinieri (Enrico Lo Verso) and his attempt to connect with two troubled kids: an eleven-year-old girl (Valentina Scalici) whose mother turned her into a prostitute, and her sickly younger brother (Giuseppe Ieracitano). The director, Gianni Amelio (who co-wrote the script with Sandro Petraglia and Stefano Rulli), is honorable and sensitive; the movie has some tense, emotionally saturated moments, but the odyssey is a bit drawn-out and flat. The film lacks the heightened lucidity of its major models—the movies of Vittorio De Sica. Basically, you see three withdrawn people warming to each other between naps. In Italian.—M.S. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Strictly Ballroom—Baz Luhrmann's first film brings good news: Australian cinema is on the move again, with a vigor not seen since the days of "Mad Max." There's no violence in "Strictly Ballroom"—the general lack of unpleasantness, in fact, is quite unnerving—but the speed of it still leaves you reeling. A young dancer, played by Paul Mercurio, acquires a new partner (Tara Morice), dreams up a flash routine, and sets out to break the Old Guard. The plot is cut-rate melodrama, and Luhrmann knows it; but he never sneers at his hero's ambitions. Besides, there are so many other things to laugh at—the costumes, the minor characters with their major obsessions, the psychedelic makeup, the trashy music. The movie is over before you know it, and is not one to linger in the mind, or indeed pass through the mind at all; but it's a good-humored ride for the senses, never too sickly, and who can say no to that?—A.L. (2/15/93) (Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Cinema 3.)

Visions of Light: The Art of Cinematography—This documentary, directed by Arnold Glassman, Todd McCarthy, and Stuart Samuels, is much more fun than its college-catalogue title suggests. The movie is cheery, convivial, and swift: for ninety minutes, stunning images, drawn from all eras of movie history, pass before us, and we listen to a couple of dozen veteran cinematographers speaking about what they do. The craftsmen are a likable and unpretentious bunch, and it's easy to share their delight in the achievements of their colleagues and masters: the film is a joy to look at. (The clips are taken from the best possible prints, and they're all shown in their original aspect ratios.) Movielovers can argue with some of the filmmakers' choices—the near total exclusion of images from Westerns is the most serious flaw—but, in a strange way, that's part of the picture's charm. It has the power to revive senses that have been dulled by the crushing predictability of recent movies. The cinematographers interviewed include Allen Daviau, Caleb Deschanel, Haskell Wexler, John Bailey, and the late Nestor Almendros (to whom the film is dedicated).—T.R. (4/5/93) (Film Forum.)

Who's the Man?—This self-proclaimed "hip-hop whodunit" is more of a "why'd they do that?" Doctor Dre and Ed Lover, the hosts of "Yo! MTV Raps," play freestyle barbers who (briefly) become cops. Everything they do inside the barbershop is funny; the rest of the plot needs a trim, along with more and better gags. Dre and Lover solve a non-mysterious murder mystery and crack a real-estate-extortion scam that threatens their Harlem 'hood. The movie is simultaneously loud and lulling. The self-consciously snappy shooting and editing backfire—they create a rhythm that's more singsong than hip-hop. And the Wall of Rap on the soundtrack is overused and undermodulated—a black version of white noise. Directed by Ted Demme, from a script by Seth Greenland.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Criterion Center.)

Wide Sargasso Sea—John Duigan's adaptation of Jean Rhys's strange and memorable 1966 novel is set in the West Indies of the mid-nineteenth century, and an air of thick tropical sensuality pervades the movie's imagery. The hero, a young Englishman named Edward Rochester (Nathaniel Parker), arrives in Jamaica sick with fever after his long ocean passage; his stay on the island, during which he marries a ravishing Creole heiress named Antoinette Cosway (Karina Lombard), is a blur of heightened perception and disordered reason. As the marriage goes bad, events take on a nightmarish inevitability, as if they were moving toward a preordained end. They are: the hero of this picture is the younger self of the Rochester that Charlotte Brontë created in "Jane Eyre," the brooding landowner who kept his mad wife locked up in his English estate house; and Antoinette is the young woman who became his prisoner and his shameful secret. Duigan and his cinematographer, Geoff Burton, merge the luxuriant erotic tension of a tropical idyll with the clammy apprehension of gothic fiction. And the film is so serenely paced and so envelopingly lovely to watch that you may not realize until the end that it is, in the deepest sense, a horror movie—an intimate portrayal of the relationship between a monster and his victim. Also with Claudia Robinson, Rowena King, Rachel Ward, and Michael York. Stewart Copeland's score is superb.—T.R. (4/19/93) (Village East Cinemas, Cinema II, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

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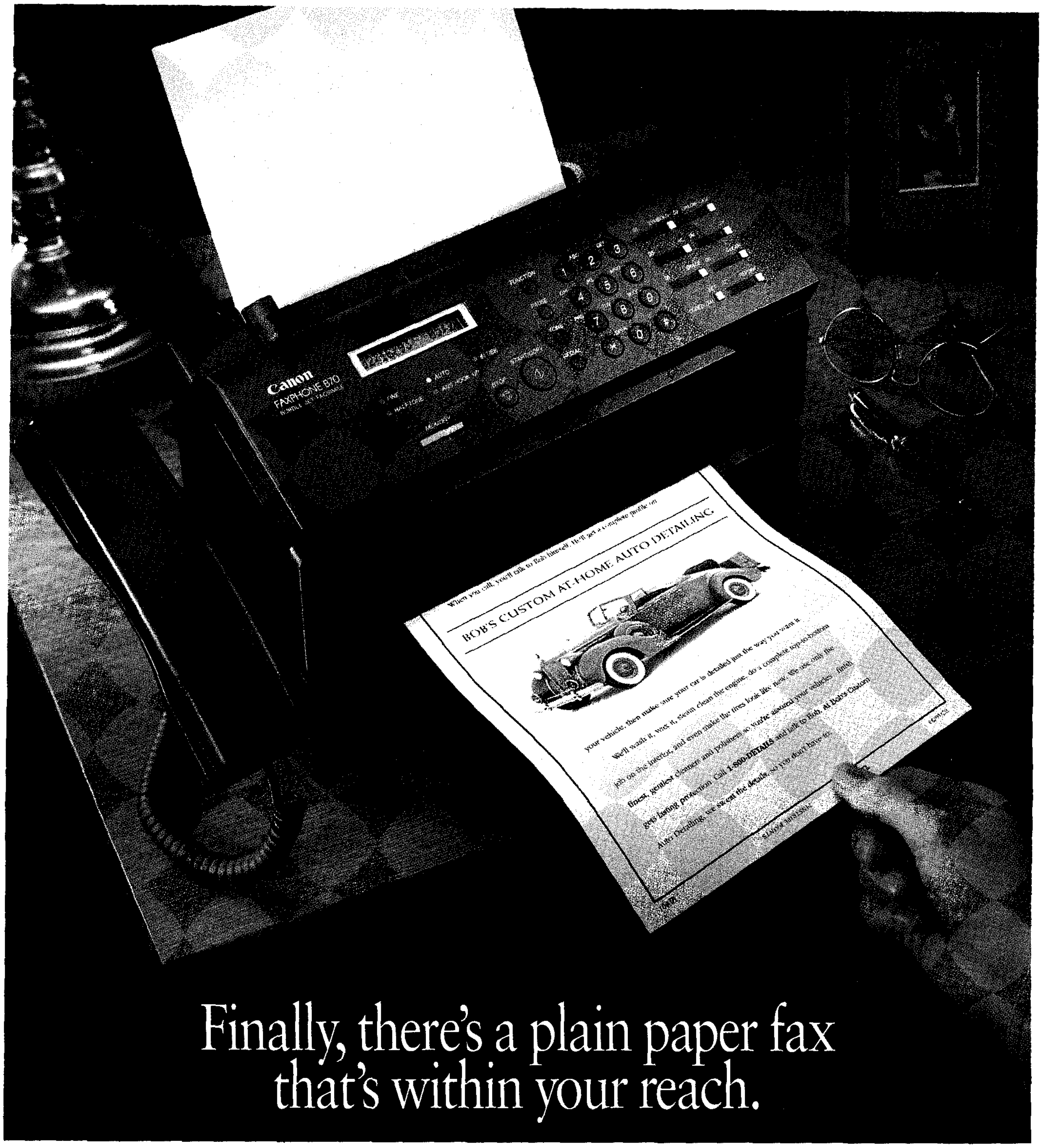
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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

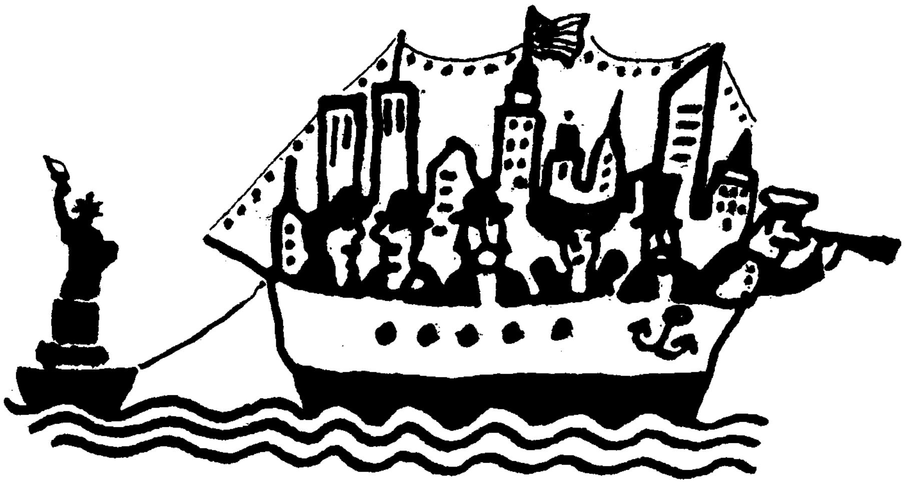
A DAY WITH LINCOLN

ABRAHAM LINCOLN was six feet four; Bill Clinton is six feet two. Why, then, was the lectern in the Great Hall of the Cooper Union, from which Mr. Lincoln made his celebrated "Right makes might" speech, in 1860, considered too low for our current President to speak from? Whatever the reason, on the evening before his arrival at the Hall, last Wednesday afternoon, to deliver what had been billed as "a major Presidential speech," a shim was inserted under the base of the lectern to raise it a few inches. During the speech, we were invited to reflect further on the President's anatomy: Mr. Clinton revealed that the Nashville shoe company of Johnston & Murphy, observing a long tradition of presenting made-to-measure shoes to new Presidents, had written him that his were the largest Presidential feet since Woodrow Wilson's.

It was only on the Friday beforehand that the White House had asked the president of the Cooper Union, John Jay Iselin, if Mr. Clinton might use the university's historic Great Hall to make his speech, and before the day was over the Secret Service had swarmed all over the building. The categorization of the speech as a "major Presidential" one, as opposed to just any old Presidential address, was no trivial matter: it meant, the White House explained, that admission tickets would have to carry the Presidential seal and be printed in appropriate colors—red, blue, or green—to show the pecking order of the guests. Mindy Lang, the head of the university's Design Center, was alerted at home on the weekend and immediately set to work on her computer.

As is the case with any Presidential appearance, preparations for the Cooper Union event were meticulous and exhaustive. The President's speech-writing team obtained copies of the speeches of all the Presidents who had spoken in the Great Hall since it opened, in 1858—Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant, Grover Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson. As it turned out, only Wilson and Lincoln were referred to in the speech—above all, Lincoln, for this was a day on which Mr. Clinton's image-builders had chosen to wrap him in the mantle of the great man. Starting the day in the Oval Office, he had sat in front of a bronze bust of Lincoln, the latter's nose seeming to rest on his left shoulder, as he was televised live by NBC's "Today" show during a radio interview with Don Imus. That night, he attended a fifteen-hundred-dollar-a-plate fund-raising dinner at Lincoln Center. In between, he had spoken from Lincoln's lectern, with another bust of Lincoln behind him—this time, a marble one, on a column.

The President's advance men had scoured the building for appropriate historical artifacts with which to decorate the stage. They had taken not only the Lincoln bust from the lobby but also a nearby bust of George Washington and a portrait of Benjamin Franklin, from the back of the Great Hall. This picture, moved to the left side of the stage, was matched on the other side by a portrait of Peter Cooper, the philanthropist who opened his Union, at the north end of the Bowery, in 1859 as a free university for the working classes. While the Great Hall, with its tradition as a launching pad for idealistic initiatives, offered the right kind of atmosphere for an appeal for economic sacrifice, Mr. Clinton's people found the stage still a little too bare for television purposes and decked it out in maroon drapery with gold fringes. They even decided to spruce up Lincoln's lectern, replacing its tattered original gold fringe with a new one. Such are the demands of publicists and image-builders. But such people were also around in Lincoln's day. It is said



ANDRZEJ CZECZOT

that the Great Hall was chosen as the venue for his speech in part because it was near Mathew Brady's photographic shop—a proximity that permitted rapid distribution of pamphlets illustrated with a photograph of young Lincoln, his high collar pulled up to conceal the length of his neck.

Mr. Clinton's speech was received with something approaching rapture, a circumstance that may partly be explained by a general state of excitement among several dozen architecture students, who, to their joy, had been made to evacuate the building that morning in the middle of their final exams: there had been the traditional Presidential bomb scare.

BIBLIOPHILE

DR. UMBERTO ECO was in town the other day, peddling one of his difficult books. He said some of them were extremely serious (there are thirteen in all), and he didn't expect they would be widely or quickly read. This didn't bother him particularly. He said that he himself hadn't read "War and Peace" until he was forty-one and was in bed with pneumonia (he's sixty-one now), and that recently in New York he had bought some very old books (one was published in 1513) that no one had read in many hundreds of years.

He was in a restaurant off Union Square, sipping an espresso, and jazz was playing in the background. The weather was just clearing up after a pelting afternoon rain. Dr. Eco was wearing a pair of black leather shoes, thick soled—the latest European style. Otherwise, he looked pretty conventional, in jacket and tie. He said he kept thirty thousand books in his apartment in Milan, which looked out over the Castello Sforzesco, on the outskirts of the old city. Bats roosted in the towers there, and would flit in through his windows on summer evenings.

Artificial languages, ancient languages, nonexistent languages, lunatic science—these, he said, were the fields that interested him, as far as old books went. These were passions, not hobbies, and were inseparable from semiotics, which is his academic field. He still teaches at the University of Bologna, six hours per week. He explained all this in stiff, accented paragraphs, waving his hands all the while. "Semiotics: at this point, the American journalist will open the bracket and say, 'An arcane discipline which deals with signs and symbols.' Let us just say that it is a general philosophy of communication, O.K.?"

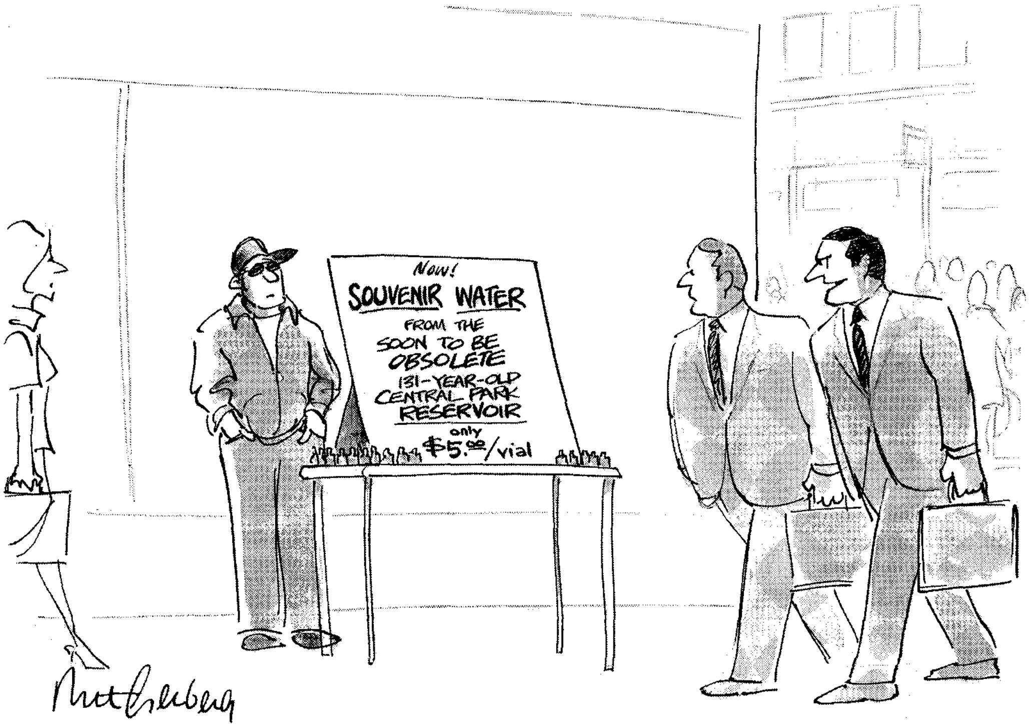
He didn't really want to talk about the success of his book "The Name of the Rose," he said, because he'd told that story so many times before. St. Thomas Aquinas, Aristotle, Joyce, Bach: those were his favorite figures in history. His favorite time was the sixteen-hundreds: Europe on the verge of the Enlightenment. "They didn't wash themselves, so it would have been a stinky period," he said, "but with many fascinating aspects."

After his espresso, Dr. Eco put on a blue raincoat and ambled around Union Square, looking at the pies for sale in the farmers' market. His pipe trailed furrows of smoke as he walked on. "Absolutely secure people are idiots," he said, apropos of nothing in particular, and then, "Insecurity is the key to an honest job." He had taught at N.Y.U., most recently in 1976, and his son lived in the Village, so this part of town was home for him in New York. He talked about Pakistani newspaper-sellers he knew in the neighborhood, and how they were more personable than the news-venders uptown. Then he said he was going off to Indiana that weekend, and he used the word "Hoosier," drawing out the syllables in a most engaging way.

LENNY'S LEGACY

"I TRUST that these few days will be *provocative, hopeful, and fun,* because my father would not have had it any other way," a youngish man said in his greetings to a well-dressed crowd that filled the front hall of the governor's mansion in Nashville, Tennessee. If he lacked his father's electric manner, there was no mistaking the paternal inheritance in his hawklike features, cigarette-roughened baritone, and tensely coiled posture. And when he betrayed his New York origins by trying for a "Y'all" and it came out "You-all" his face widened with a grin that had the irresistible charm of Leonard Bernstein written all over it.

Since the Maestro's death, two and a half years ago, a great many people have been busy keeping alive all the recordings of Bernstein the conductor, all the classical and Broadway scores of Bernstein the composer, all the videos of Bernstein the media star, all



"You gotta love this city, right?"

the writings of Bernstein the thinker. In this avalanche of Bernsteiniana, nothing may be of more enduring value than the example of Bernstein the teacher of great music. Fortunately, CBS preserved on tape Bernstein's hugely successful television series "Young People's Concerts." Just as fortunately, the Maestro had a son, Alexander, who grew up to share his passion for teaching, and whose appearance a few weeks ago in Nashville marked the inauguration of what was perhaps the project closest to his father's heart before he died—the Leonard Bernstein Center for Education Through the Arts.

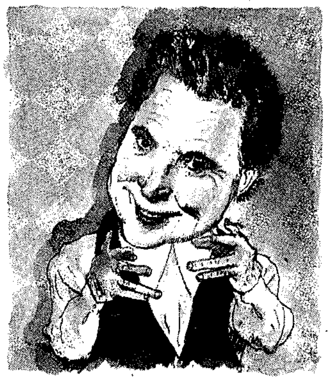
Why Nashville? "My father had heard about something called the Nashville Institute for the Arts, which was training local teachers to use the arts as an educational tool," said his son, who recently gave up teaching drama at a middle school in Brooklyn to run the Bernstein Education Through the Arts Fund, which oversees the Center in conjunction with the Nashville Institute. "He was turned on by the idea that the arts were being viewed not simply as an élite pastime but as a learning experience, and he donated about a hundred and fifty thousand dollars to the program. After he died, I came down here, and was overwhelmed by what I saw. We decided to lend the Bernstein name to what people were doing and give them further support."

More than two hundred people had been invited to the kickoff of this unusual partnership, and they included arts educators, would-be arts educators, education reformers, and sympathizers from the worlds of computers, show business, and the media. During a two-day stay, they were wined and dined by Governor Ned McWherter in his opulent Georgian-style mansion. They were given lunch at the Parthenon in Centennial Park, the replica-in-beige of the temple on the Acropolis. They were given brunch in the mirrored and chandeliered Magnolia Ballroom of the Opryland Hotel.

They heard the ABC newsman Peter Jennings, a member of the Bernstein Center's National Advisory Council, speak with anchorman smoothness in praise of schools that would teach "heart" over "smart." They heard Lauren Bacall, who long ago earned the right to call Alexander's father Lenny, read

LINGERIE IN FLIGHT

My secret opinion about the panties that were strewn playfully around the black suède shoes of Tom Jones the other night on the stage of the Limelight was that they were props. The Limelight—a former Episcopal church, at Twentieth and Sixth, in Chelsea—was like a torture chamber in Hell. There was no floor space in sight—just sixteen hundred people standing together in a smoky nightmare of flashing lights and darkness and an incessant drumbeat that couldn't be extinguished. I had asked a customarily circumspect man what he thought the attraction of Tom Jones might be. He said, without a second thought, "The panties. You want to see the undies fly." I now asked a normal-looking twenty-eight-year-old New York woman why she was enduring this hell just to see Tom Jones. "My mom liked him, and I love that song 'Delilah,'" she said, as if it were a perfectly reasonable excuse. People were screaming "Tom! Tom! Tom!" as if the end of the world were near. "My girlfriend brought underwear," the woman went on. "She's going to throw it—not the ones she's wearing."



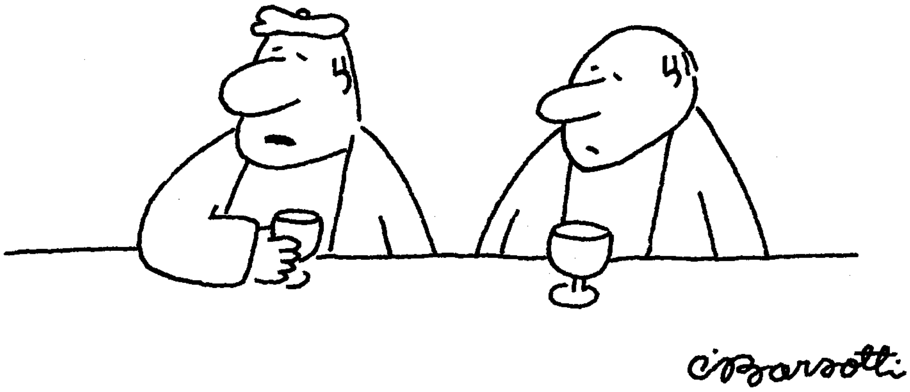
BARRY BLITT

When Tom Jones appeared on the small stage, he was wearing what seemed to be a uniform—a black jacket with fourteen red "X"s on it. He's fifty-three, a boxy man, not tall. In this light, he looked something like a pile of gray ashes pressed into the shape of Tom Jones. He sang "Kiss," by Prince, in an unthrilling way, and two pairs of little white panties fell on the stage near his feet. Tom didn't pay any attention to them. When he sang "Why, why, why, Delilah," there was huge applause, and more panties appeared on the stage. Tom used to gyrate; now he was swinging his arms, and he made some effort to move his legs. He grimaced a lot and bobbed up and down in time to his still raucous and woozily voluptuous voice.

At 12:10 A.M., Tom took off his jacket with the fourteen red "X"s on it. He used to wear slippery shirts unbuttoned all the way to the waist, but now he was wearing a black T-shirt; he looked like a bouncer. And he was wearing gold: watch, chain, bracelet. His short, grayish hair grew curlier and fuzzier as the night went on. While singing "What's new, Pussycat? Wo-oh, wo-oh, wo, wo, wo," he trampled (perhaps inadvertently) on a small pair of white panties. More of the same sort of violence took place when he sang "Help Yourself." Women of all ages blew him kisses.

Tom has the nose of a porcelain doll on the face of a rough man. When he sang "It's Not Unusual," he kicked two pairs of white and one pair of black panties out of his way. A pair of leopard bikini panties seemed to fall out of the dark ceiling. (The woman with the panties in her pocketbook wouldn't have been able to hit the stage with them from where she stood.) As Tom sang "Goodness gracious, great balls of fire," he continually wiped perspiration off his face with his right hand. He has thick hands but not big hands, and his fingers are roundish. Drops of perspiration fell from his hand onto the panties on the floor. Seven glasses of water stood on a tray onstage, and in the course of the show he drank all of them.

After the show, I asked him what generally happened to all those panties. We were sitting on a bench in what they call the Library of the Limelight. Tom looked straight at me with his small, pale-blue eyes, gave me a gentlemanly smile of bemusement, and said, "I have no idea." —Alison Rose



"I never saw 'Cheers,' so I won't miss 'Cheers.' "

• •

with smoky authority such Lennyisms as "The gift of the imagination is not just the artist's—it's a gift we all share."

In this age of multiculturalism, no one stood up to raise any sticky question about what the *content* of arts education ought to be. Away from the dais, however, Dr. Scott T. Massey, who is the high-energy executive director of the Nashville Institute for the Arts and is also the Bernstein Center's founding president, was asked whether he still believed in such old-fashioned approaches as the teaching of art or music history at the high-school level. The question was clearly not on his agenda. "We're not thinking about the arts in separate packages," he said. "We're looking for a new container—one that moves from context to context, just as Bernstein did."

MING'S CLAMBAKE

At a ceremony held this month at Bridgewaters, a gathering place down on Fulton Street, Ming Cho Lee, who has been a designer of stage sets for over two hundred plays, musicals, operas, and dance performances, and a teacher of stage design at the Yale Drama School for a quarter of a century, was given what is said to be the only national prize devoted solely to honoring excellence in stage design. This new prize, in the amount of five thousand dollars, bears a jawbreakingly long name: The Long Wharf Theatre Mary L. Murphy Award in Design. As one might readily surmise, it is administered by the Long Wharf Theatre, in New Haven.

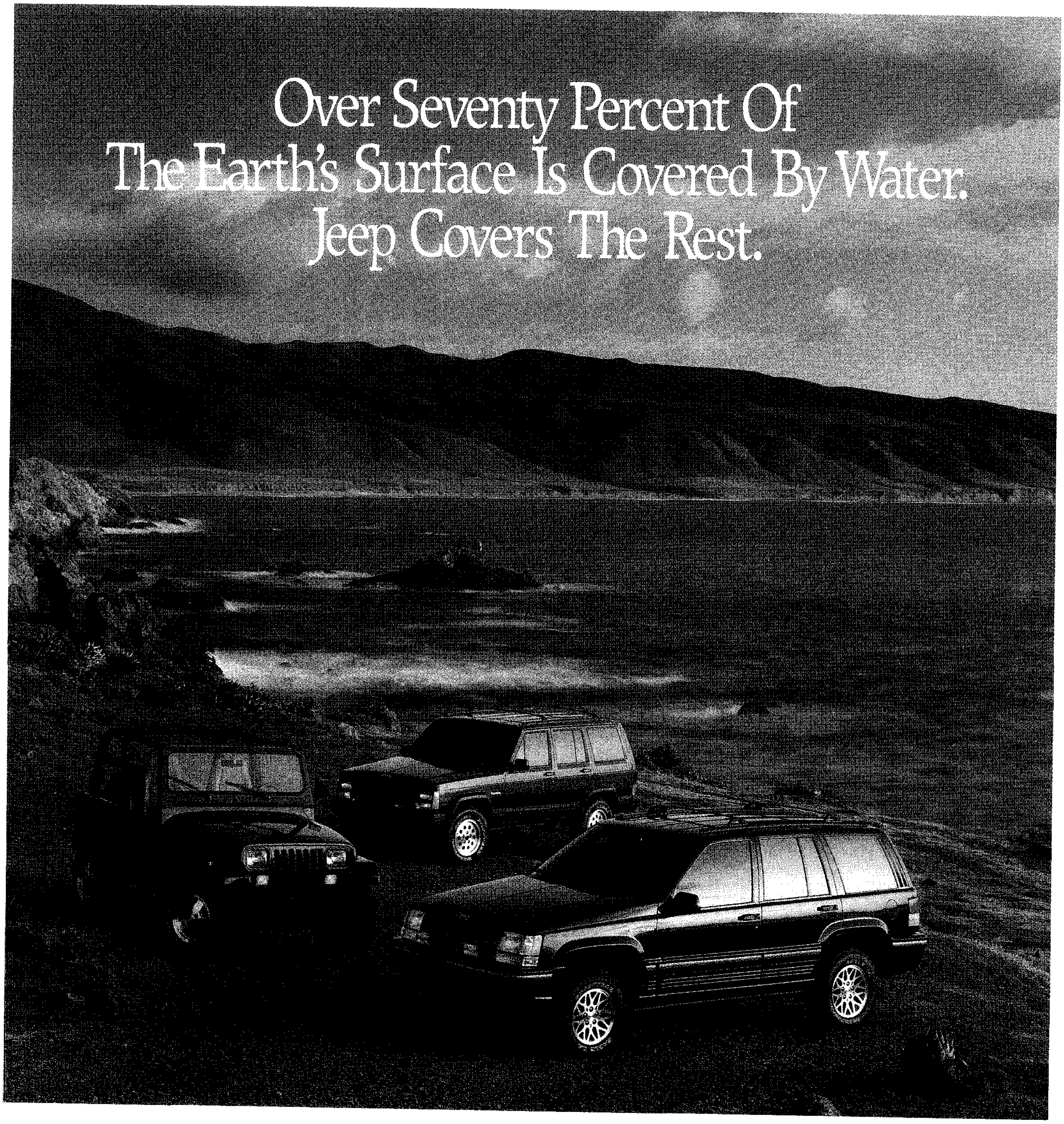
Lee has a thatch of graying hair, a round face, and a musical voice with a hint of Oxford accent. He said that the award had caught him by surprise. "Our work as stage designers is so transitory. Most of the Broadway plays that I've designed sets for have been failures, sometimes lasting only a few days before the sets were taken down and destroyed. For Joe Papp, I designed the first three plays that he put on at the Delacorte Theatre, in Central Park—'The Merchant of Venice,' 'The Tempest,' and 'King Lear'—but that was back in the sixties, and who could expect the public to remember them? My father, who lives in Hong Kong and is ninety-six years old, was always fearful of my starting a career in the arts. He thought it was financially too risky, and, of course, he was right. Perhaps he will consider the Long Wharf prize reassuring. He himself has been an insurance man—very prudent. He graduated from Yale in 1919 and started his business in Shanghai, where I was born. The year was 1930—not a propitious moment to come into the world."

Having completed his high-school studies in Shanghai, Lee arrived in this country in his late teens and enrolled in Occidental College, in Los Angeles. He took as many courses in art and assorted theatre activities as he could, and after graduating he journeyed East with an armful of watercolors. He contrived to show them to the leading stage designer of the day, Jo Mielziner, who was then busily engaged in designing Harold Rome's "Fanny" and Cole Porter's "Silk Stockings." Lee worked for Mielziner for several years and with another celebrated designer, Boris Aronson, for a couple of years; among the first sets he designed on his own were those for a 1958 Phoenix Theatre production of Cocteau's "The Infernal Machine" and that same year for a production of Arthur Miller's "The Crucible." He started to teach design at Yale in the sixties, and he boasts that some of his students—John Lee Beatty, Michael Yeargan, Tony Straiges—are far better known than he is.

Lee designed the most celebrated of his sets in 1982, for a play called "K2," which had to do with the climbing of a Himalayan peak of that name. The single, immensely high set consisted of a sheer cliff face of seemingly solid snow and ice. (The basic material was Styrofoam.) Audiences were so beguiled by the set that for the first ten or fifteen minutes after the curtain went up they tended to ignore the play. "I begged the producers not to use a house curtain," Lee said. "I wanted the audiences to get used to the set before the play started. Although I won a Tony for the set, I regard it as a failure, because a set should never call attention to itself."

Among Lee's latest commissions is the design for Terrence McNally's new play, "A Perfect Ganesh," which, starring Zoe Caldwell and Frances Sternhagen, is slated to open at the Manhattan Theatre Club the last week of June. "Terrence has written a play that hops all over the place—scene after scene after scene, therefore set after set after set," Lee said. "The stage at the Manhattan Theatre Club is exceptionally low-ceilinged and very wide, and I have tried to take advantage of those disadvantages."

The inevitable question: What does Lee plan to do with his five-thousand-dollar prize? The answer: He will contribute it to the cost of an event held every spring at Lincoln Center and known as Ming's Clambake—a seminar for gifted students of theatre design who, coming here from schools all over the country, show their portfolios and discuss their handiwork with Lee and other professional designers and teachers. "To spend all that money on a clambake—no doubt my father would consider that characteristically imprudent of me," Lee said. "I will take care to keep him uninformed." ♦



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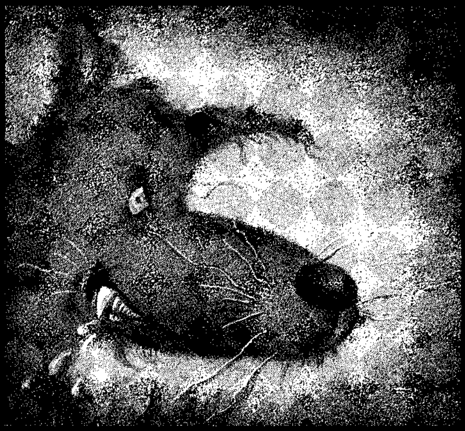
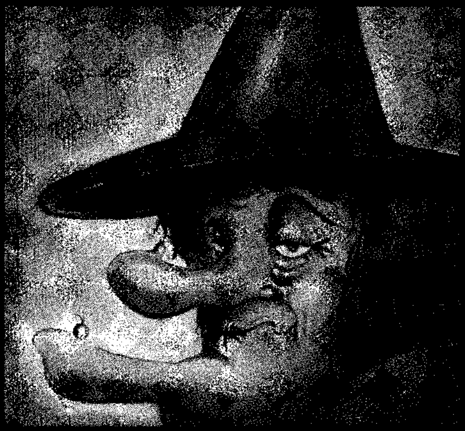
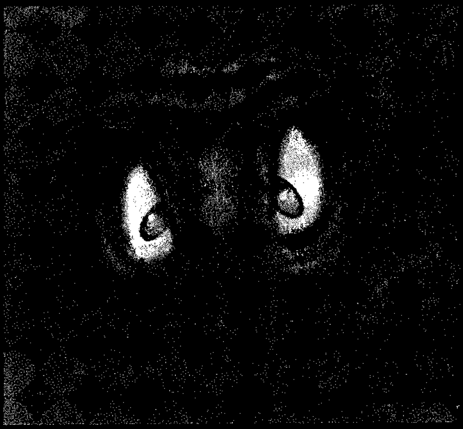


The Big Bad Wolf



The Wicked Witch



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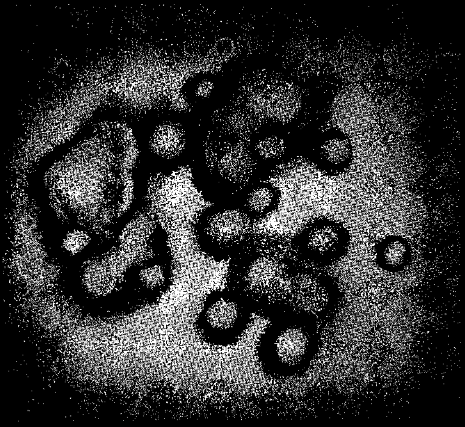

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CULTURAL PURSUITS

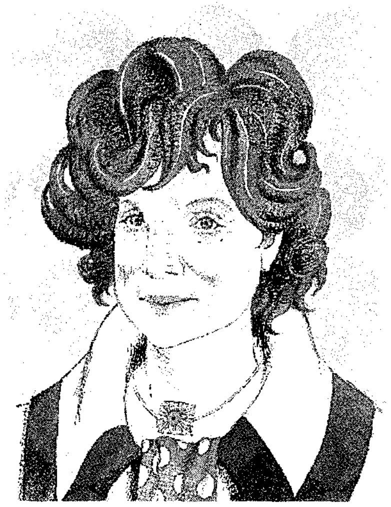
MURIEL SPARK BETWEEN THE LINES

There is a spiritual secret to Muriel Spark's fiction and her new autobiography is as elegantly elusive as her novels.

BY STEPHEN SCHIFF

MURIEL SPARK has written some of the best sentences in English. For instance: "He looked as if he would murder me and he did."

It's a nasty piece of work, that sentence. By the time you come across it, about three-quarters of the way through Spark's 1956 short story "The Portobello Road," you know that the narrator is a female ghost. What you don't know is how she came to be one, and Spark's impudent declaration informs you so curtly that for a moment the blow is difficult to absorb. The first clause is about a glance, the second about a catastrophe, yet both have the same nonchalant tone, and it is this evenness of tone that freezes the spine. Whatever *frisson* Spark might have aroused by thundering her message home she has topped by tossing it away; that sentence feels unearthly, bleached of humanity—the seemingly genuine utterance of a ghost. "There's something aggressive about it," Spark admits. "I've put a lot of tension into it, and I've left the emotion out. I don't really like very much writing about emotion. I like for it to be read between the lines."



"I'm very interested in fictional methods of persuading people that what you're saying is true," Spark says.

TULLIO PERICOLI

In a sense, everything about Muriel Spark has to be read between the lines; nothing about her is quite straightforward. Her demeanor is at once mandarin and schoolgirlish, her accent half Edinburgh and half Queen Elizabeth, and her conversation veers from space-cadet fuzz to a satirical precision that makes one grateful not to be its target. She has been photographed a lot since she emerged, thirty-six years ago, with a spectacular first novel called "The Comforters," and especially since the early sixties, when her slim and haunting book "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie" (and its stage and screen adaptations) made her internationally famous. Yet no two pictures of her look at all alike. In one she may seem a sturdy English rose, in another a seductress staring down her prey, in still another an intellectual prankster peeking wryly over her spectacles, and sometimes she looks merely square and oatmeal-faced, grinning wholesomely into too much flashbulb.

But when the real, unposed Spark sits demurely before you, her hands in her lap, in one of the murky rooms of the Tuscan rectory where she lives, what you see is a tiny and immaculate red-haired sprite who looks at least a decade younger than her seventy-five years. Her eyes are immense and deep-sea blue, and beneath them little freckles are scattered like bits of runaway mascara; above, there are hardly any eyebrows at all. She is warm and enormously friendly, and full of opinions about everything from the corruption scandals muddying the atmosphere of her adopted Italy to the swoony excesses of her favorite American soap opera, "The Bold and the Beautiful," which she watches virtually every night, in its horrible dubbed-Italian version. "I like Mexican soaps, too," she says. "That's what I watch when I'm writing, so that I don't read anything very good. In case I should be influenced, you know." When she tells you something she thinks is amusing, she keeps a straight face for a moment, eying you curiously to see whether you get it. If you laugh, she gives out with a squealing schoolgirl giggle—either that or a dazzling social smile, the kind by which talented ingénues have landed aristocratic husbands from time immemorial.

Talking to her, one feels that the role of Famous Novelist has not been easy for her to adopt, that she's never been quite sure how to play it: should she be glamorous, provocative, slightly dotty, or all three? She had been a starving writer and editor in the classic style when success bonked her on the head in the late fifties, first with "The Comforters," which Evelyn Waugh (with uncharacteristic generosity) acclaimed as similar to but better than his own "The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold," and then, in 1959, with "Memento Mori," a complex, beautiful, and terrifyingly insightful book about old age, which Graham Greene claimed "has delighted me as much as any novel that I have read since the war." But renown wasn't as comfortable as anonymity had been. Spark began to feel hounded and confined. "Some of my old friends were absolutely wonderful," she says, "but some were just so jealous and nasty, writing books and articles against me, and ringing me up with all sorts of barbed, double-tongued things, and intrigues. I had a terrible time. You know, people would ring up to say, 'Can you come out tonight?' And I'd say, 'No, I'm writing.' And they'd say, 'Oh, yes, you're too grand now.' And I'd say, 'Yes, I've always been too grand—go away.' "

Apparently, she had taken them by surprise. For Spark was a late bloomer (she was thirty-nine when "The Comforters" appeared), and although she had written a few solid biographies and some decent poetry, the fringe literary world that she inhabited was not prepared for her instant emergence as a novelist of the first rank. The moment she found her métier, she began to turn out novels at an astonishing rate—sometimes more than one a year—and with a rare consistency: her most recent fictions, "A Far Cry from Kensington" (1988) and "Symposium" (1990), rank with her finest. That sort of consistency can, of course, lead to an unjust diminution of reputation, and in Spark's case it probably has. John Updike wrote, in 1981, "One is torn between admiration for a certain brilliantly sustained poise and regret that, somehow, since 'The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie' (1961), she has held her prominent place without enlarging upon it." I would dispute that charge, for it seems to me that the more bricks she has added to the edifice the more imposing it has become: it now makes up one of the most trenchant and accomplished bodies of literary work since the Second World War. Still, Spark is probably more known about than read these days—a condition exacerbated by her having lived most of her life as an expatriate. If she had stayed in England she would almost certainly be Dame Muriel by now.

Instead, in 1962, she decamped to New York and moved in the literary circles that emanated from this magazine. When the success of "Miss Jean Brodie" renewed her claustrophobia, she fled again, this time to Rome, where she spent the late sixties and all of the seventies, writing prolifically and plunging into the social whirl. "Muriel had a reputation in Rome, which came from her having a very grand apartment," says the writer and translator William Weaver, who lived there when Spark did and lives near her in Tuscany now. "One got the impression she was always surrounded by countesses and cardinals. And none of that social life will go to waste. It'll all appear in her novels. In fact, I'm not sure I'd like to be one of those cardinals. But Muriel is single-minded when she works, and if the Pope himself called her up she would say she was busy and she'd get back to him in a month."

Spark arrived in Rome at the tail end of the Hollywood-on-the-Tiber era, made famous by Fellini's movie "La Dolce Vita." "I went because I thought it was exciting," she says. "There were *very* amusing people, mostly expatriates or Italians, sometimes the nobility. They're very amusing to watch and to write about and to be with. Rome really was the height of my social life. I had some social life in America, but it was few and far between. In Rome, some of it was very grand. And I had quite a good place to be able to give *very* nice parties, and things were not so expensive then, either. I went in for a lot of pretty dresses, evening dresses and high fashion. But I came into a completely unmarriageable set. Totally homosexual. They were either married already or totally homosexual. I didn't realize that that's what I

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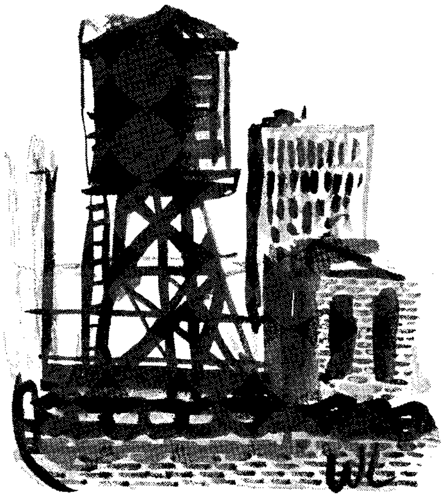
was coming into. In the end, it kept me down a bit. I didn't have any man in my life. But I was much too busy, too, writing absolutely one book after another. Writing a lot, an awful lot. It was all pent up. I had it in me, and I thought, I must get it out while it's there. Really, I wanted to write stories and novels. I still do. I'm not very keen on anything else. I love to sit there writing something. It's the happiest thing I could do."

She seems to have applied this same gusto to writing her new autobiography, "Curriculum Vitae" (much of which first appeared in this magazine), researching it as painstakingly as if it were the history of a stranger. With mixed results. The book has Spark's characteristic elegance and also her usual ruthless clarity, but it treats her life as a series of surfaces, detailed yet impenetrable. We learn everything about what people ate and drank and said in her native Edinburgh during the twenties and thirties; what we don't learn is what it was that cultivated the extraordinary novelist she became.

Instead, we get a misty vision of a happy Scottish childhood. Spark was born Muriel Camberg. Her father was an engineer, and Jewish; her mother was English, and inordinately superstitious. There was also a grandmother who had marched with the suffragettes, and a sterling schoolteacher named Christina Kay, on whom Spark eventually modelled Miss Jean Brodie. We get a bony outline of Muriel's short, disastrous marriage to a schoolteacher named Sydney Oswald Spark (S.O.S., for short); when she was nineteen, he whisked her off to Southern Rhodesia and then turned out to be dangerously violent and unstable. We get sketches of her activities in the secret-intelligence service during the war, when she worked with the "black propaganda" unit, which broadcast what she calls "detailed truth with believable lies" to the Nazis (suitable training for a novelist). We get glimpses of her entry into the world of publishing during Britain's financially fraught forties and fifties, of her steeping herself in the writings of the maverick nineteenth-century cardinal John Henry Newman, of her conversion to Catholicism, in 1954 (which she tells us is "both too easy and too difficult" to explain), and of her breakdown shortly thereafter, brought on by her habit of gulping down Dexedrine as an appetite suppressant; in those days, she was too poor to eat. The book ends abruptly soon afterward, with her cure and the publication of her first novel, and we are meant to believe she has lived happily ever after—which is not, perhaps, very far from the truth. As a record of a vanished era, "Curriculum Vitae" makes voluptuous reading, and as a catalogue of Spark's gripes against those who did her wrong during her formative years (or disseminated minor errors about her history) it is impressively persnickety. But as autobiography it's something of a failure: once again, you have to read between the lines.

"I SEE you have all the lights on." Penelope Jardine tuts; she has just entered the room, bearing tea. Jardine is Spark's companion, amanuensis, and best friend. Fifteen years Spark's junior, with a helmet of straight graying hair, and a low rumble of a voice which she often deploys as a kind of counterweight to Spark's higher declamations, Jardine is the owner and restorer of the rambling fifteenth-century rectory, near Arezzo, in which she and Spark live and work. Twenty-five rooms have been opened up by now, many with low, thick-beamed ceilings, wavy floors, and occasional oddities like the stone sink beneath a window in the room we're sitting in. Jardine is a sculptor—her studio is next door, in a twelfth-century church—but the rectory is clearly her life's work. That, and the care and feeding of Muriel Spark. It is Jardine who types the manuscripts and handles the finances; she also does all the driving and all the gardening and tends the olive trees and the grapevines and the two dogs and the cats beyond number. Somewhat mischievously, I ask Spark just what *she* does, and she says, "I take Penelope tea in the morning. That's what I do, wake her up. I give her tea in bed. And what else do I do? Very little, except make my own bed. I take Penelope out a lot to meals, because she can't, obviously, be doing the cooking and the shopping as well. I don't know, I think I pull my weight somehow or other."



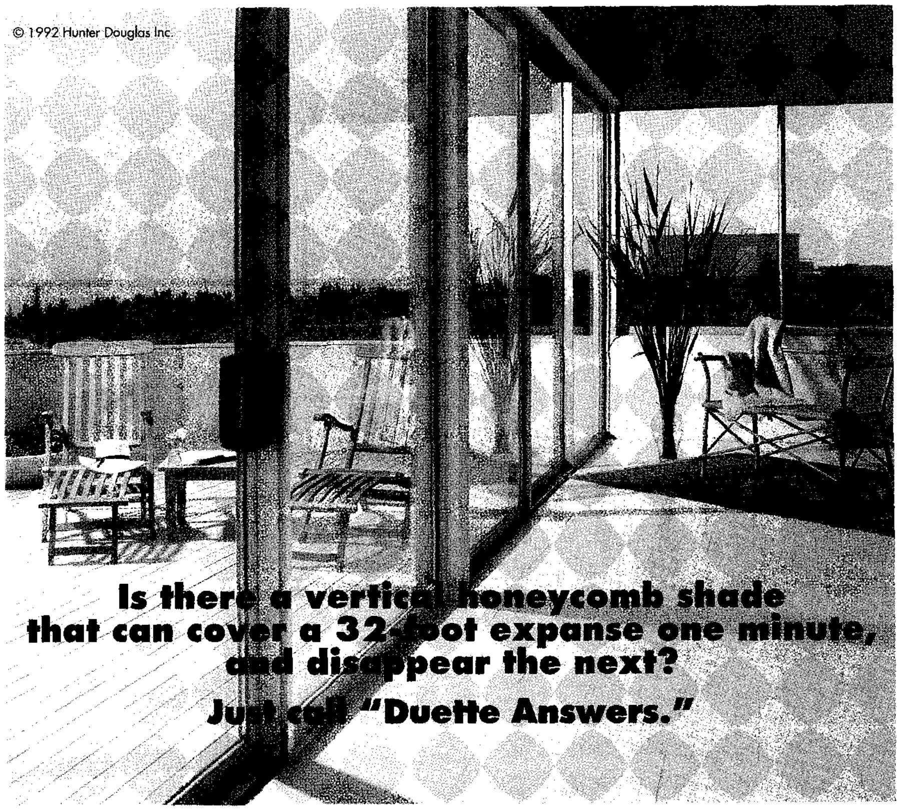
Jardine entered her life twenty-five years ago, when Spark was living in Rome and looking for a secretary. Gradually, the relationship blossomed. "If I wanted to go to Venice to case the joint for my novel, we'd go," Spark says. "Penny was that sort of a friend. She was on my level, which some secretaries aren't. Then she wanted to live here in the country, and I didn't want to be alone in Rome without somebody helping me, and I could see that there were prospects here for lovely writing. So . . . "

So, eleven years ago, Spark moved from Rome to Tuscany. Her life is certainly tamer there, though she and Jardine do socialize, both with the locals and with the expatriate colony in the area—William Weaver, the music critic Andrew Porter, the art critic Sir John Pope-Hennessy—and there are occasional pilgrimages to Florence to see the writer Sir Harold Acton. "At dinner, if there are a lot of younger people there, Muriel is kind of the star," William Weaver says. "It's not that she acts like a star, but she stars in a very agreeable way, and everybody goes away saying, 'Wasn't she wonderful!' She sings for her supper, and very enjoyably. But mostly we don't have intellectual conversations. Our conversation is about local scandals or problems with neighbors, our animals. We talk about the vet quite a lot—the vet is a great figure in Muriel's life."

There aren't many others. Her parents and many of her friends are now dead; she has a brother, who lives in California, and a son, Robin, in Edinburgh. "He's a painter," she says, "and he's fifty-four now, and he likes his own life. He has never come here. I don't know why he doesn't come. I always have to go there." Reared from the age of seven by Muriel's parents (who were more settled after the war than Muriel, and who, she writes in her autobiography, "were pining to have him"), Robin has taken to the faith of his grandfather, and even gone beyond it. "He's a Jew, and he tends toward the Orthodox," Spark says. "And I can't go along with it. It's very difficult, first of all, to produce meals. My mother found it difficult with him, when he became a Jew. He became so Orthodox she didn't know what to do. She had to walk miles to get Jewish meat. And I said, 'Oh, don't do it.' But she didn't want to upset him. I don't know if he still keeps it up or not, but he does when I'm around."

Which may explain why Spark prefers to travel to England, and especially to France, always with Jardine in tow (unless air travel is required; Jardine doesn't like to fly). "I'm sometimes afraid I've hurt Penelope's chances of getting married," Spark says. "She had more men friends in Rome—artists and people. But I don't really think so—she says no. She doesn't like the idea of getting married at all. We look around and we don't see such happy marriages, you know? Penelope loves to be with me. We're very fond of each other, you know. We're not lesbians, but we're very fond of each other. After my marriage ended I never met anybody I wanted to marry who was free to marry me or wanted to marry me. Besides, you know, you're only half there if you're a writer. Men used to complain that I was only half there and wasn't listening. But I am listening. Sometimes I reflect on what people are saying, and it gives me an absent appearance."

As if to demonstrate, she pauses, and her huge eyes look wistful. Then they go opaque, and for several seconds she peers into the middle distance, a seer enjoying a visitation. Actually, this sort of thing tends to happen quite a lot. If you detect a note of mercury in her first name and of volatility in her last, that is as it should be, because there is something liquid and unpredictable about her. She has a history of fallings-out with friends and with publishers; one acquaintance recalls, "Under pressure, she would lash out. She would behave hysterically, accusing people of sabotage." Even old friends complain that they find her enigmatic, and some go much further: they say she's remote, difficult, defensive. "She can be immensely warm and playful and lots of fun, or she can be rather distant," the photographer George Mott says. "You just don't know what kind of program will operate at the moment. I think that Muriel is someone who often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teeters on the edge of madness, a kind of losing touch with reality, and I think that her writing is what she uses to bring herself back."

Certainly, Spark's novels reorder reality in peculiar ways, and madness does often seem an undercurrent in them. A brush with madness, in fact, may have been the catalyst that allowed her particular genius to flower—that and her simultaneous conversion to Roman Catholicism.

At thirty-six, for whatever reason—and the lingering trauma of her marriage may have had something to do with it—Spark found herself coming apart. "I was overreading in religious books, reading the whole of Newman—it was coincidental with that, and that might have been to do with it." In fact, Spark's conversion was probably a first attempt to piece herself back together. "It was the first philosophical integrity I've ever known," she says. "And it united a lot of disintegrating factors. It gave me a ground and something to measure from—'the still point in the turning world,' as Eliot said."

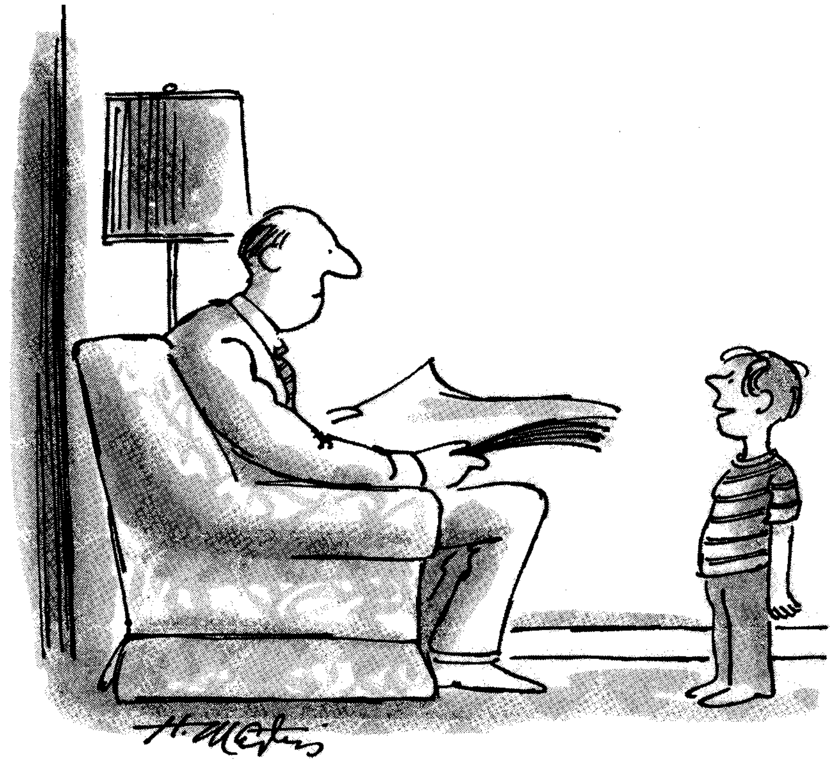
Nevertheless, in January of 1954 she began hallucinating—and, being Muriel Spark, what she hallucinated was words. "They were amazing," she says. "The words jumped about and made anagrams on the page. And the anagrams made sense."

"She was really quite batty," says Alan Maclean, who became her fiction editor. "When she was doing the *Observer* crossword, she believed that the answers to the clues were messages mocking her. And she thought that I was one of 'them'—'them' being the people who were planting the clues. For a long time afterward, when she was under pressure she would react very badly. She would feel that things and people were against her."

Finally, a doctor weaned her from the Dexedrine she had been taking, and the hallucinations subsided. But Spark remained tired and depressed, and it was only Maclean's interest in having her write a novel that eventually pulled her out of it. The book that resulted, "The Comforters," is fascinating: its heroine, Caroline Rose, is a recently converted Catholic who finds herself hallucinating not printed words but voices—voices that indicate to her that she has become a character in a novel. And, of course, she has—the very novel we're reading. Caroline copes with her predicament by poking at it, testing it. If she's a character in a novel, for instance, how can she feel pain? And what about the people around her, like the frighteningly bosomy Georgina Hogg, a loathsome busybody whose private life is so meagre that she disappears whenever she's left alone? Are Hogg's vanishings fiction or truth? And how does one come to know the difference?

"The Comforters" was sophisticated and funny—as Spark's books would always be—but its seriousness of intent was undeniable. She had learned to transmute her experience into fiction, and what set her apart from other writers who had done so was her fascination with exposing, rather than disguising, that process. Her newfound Catholicism had convinced her that there was such a thing as the absolute truth, and that to pretend that the stories a novelist invented were truths of the same order was shabby, maybe even sinful. Fiction was, she told an interviewer of the period, "a pack of lies," and she expected her reader to understand as much—it was almost a moral imperative. Hence she set out to make her tales highly artificial: outlandish things would happen in them; there would be infernally complex conspiracies; there would be ghosts and sorcerers; there would be fantastic coincidences; most of all, there would be characters who themselves exposed the fictional process by inventing fictions of their own—liars, plotters, conspirators, spiritualists, villains who threatened the circle of friends or colleagues at the heart of almost every Spark novel by playing God with people's lives. Spark's bugbears aren't sadists or psychopaths; they're meddlers and manipulators, like Jean Brodie—in short, they're characters who try to wrest the course of events from their Creator and take matters into their own hands. The way authors do.

But Spark wasn't interested merely in proclaiming her fictions to be fictions. She also wanted them to be seductive, and in order to accomplish that she had to make them completely convincing. "In fiction, plausibility is the big thing," she says. "Veracity. Veracity is in details, not necessarily leading anywhere—just chance details, throwaway things that have got nothing to do with anything. I like to sometimes open a paragraph just by saying something and then forgetting it. Just a reflection, and then forget that, get on with the story, because that's very often the way people think. I'm very interested in fictional methods of persuading people that what you're



"If the phone bill seems a little high next month, it may be due to a two-hour conference call I had with Teddy and Wally, who are on spring break in London and Honolulu."

saying is true. It's an illusion, but there are many, many methods of creating this illusion."

One of the best, of course, is to command a prose style so vivid, authoritative, and entertaining that you trample the reader's objections before they arise. Spark's prose is like that: it functions as a little dynamo, propelling her characters on toward the ingenious precipices she's devised for them. Hers is one of the most decisive and unmistakable voices in contemporary fiction—youthful, witty, sly, maternal, intimate, and alive with opinion. In "A Far Cry from Kensington" (1988), her patently autobiographical Mrs. Hawkins tells us, "I enjoy a puritanical and moralistic nature; it is my happy element to judge between right and wrong, regardless of what I might actually do. At the same time, the wreaking of vengeance and imposing of justice on others and myself are not at all in my line. It is enough for me to discriminate mentally and leave the rest to God." The depth of that mental discrimination is what makes Spark's style so rich: every description, every plot twist, every joke comes to us suffused with Sparkian sensibility, with the sharp and pitiless judgment that keeps her characters writhing on a narrative skewer. The tone of her books is always at least latently satirical, but it's not ungenerous. She sympathizes with her figments as easily as she lays them waste. And her most profound secret is this: she manifestly treasures her readers. We who pore over her pages are never allowed to feel less than privileged; in fact, we may find ourselves basking in the sort of comradely warmth that some of Spark's real-life friends complain of missing.

"I'm much more confiding when I write than when I speak," Spark explains. "I'm more liberated, free. Really, I love to give pleasure. I like people to laugh and cry—I don't care whether it's tragic, comic, or what. But to give artistic pleasure is a very big thing. I feel I am writing a poem when I'm writing a novel. I need to feel that." I ask her why, and she replies, "The construction part of a novel is terribly important. So is it with a poem. There is also such a thing as poetic vision. It's being aware of the value of words, sometimes in their etymology, in two or three senses, in a very quick flash as one is going

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along. That I can do quite easily. That is sort of a poetic method."

Spark's prose isn't poetic in the usual sense; nothing about it is gaseous or highfalutin. But it has its own jigging music. Her characters echo themselves, for instance, the way people do in life, and Spark fills her narration with recurring leitmotivs—the heroine's parted lips in "The Driver's Seat," Miss Brodie's repeated evocation of "her prime"—that lap and recede like waves. So do her plots. Spark's storytelling method is utterly unconventional: she creates suspense not by hiding a secret and building toward its discovery but by giving all her secrets away, again and again, adding a little more detail to each lapping wave of revelation. If the climax of "Miss Jean Brodie" is the schoolteacher's betrayal by her pupil Sandy Stranger, Spark nevertheless discloses it all before the novel is half over; we know the fate of Nicholas Farringdon, the hero of "The Girls of Slender Means" (1963), by page 7; and on page 25 of her spiny and treacherous masterpiece "The Driver's Seat" we are told that the protagonist "will be found tomorrow morning dead from multiple stab-wounds, her wrists bound with a silk scarf and her ankles bound with a man's necktie, in the grounds of an empty villa, in a park of the foreign city to which she is travelling on the flight now boarding at Gate 14."

"I'll tell you what gave me that idea of giving things away," Spark says. "I read that Trollope used to write some of his books in serial form for magazines. And he didn't know himself what he was going to write next. And people wrote to him—young ladies wrote to him and said, 'Oh, please don't let the hero die or be banished or let her marry the man she doesn't love.' So he began one serial saying, 'Fair reader, do not be dismayed. She will marry the hero in the end, but just be patient while I tell you about it.' And it didn't at all take away from the suspense. They still went on reading it. It was a very interesting thing to me. I thought, Well, suspense isn't just holding it back from the reader. Suspense is created even more by telling people what's going to happen. Because they want to know *how*. Wanting to know *what* happened is not so strong as wanting to know *how*."

Spark's novels are so polished that one might easily believe she spends weeks calculating and smoothing those sentences of hers, in the tortured manner of Balzac or Flaubert. The unsettling truth, however, is quite the opposite. For Spark is a natural, a paradigm of that rare sort of artist from whom work of the highest quality flows as elementally as current through a circuit: hook her to a pen and the juice purls out of her. When she's working on a novel, she writes virtually every day, in the morning and then for a few hours after lunch, using only "virgin pens"—pens she is sure no one else has ever touched—and setting it all down in Bothwell Spiral notebooks from Edinburgh, the same kind she wrote in as a schoolgirl. She shows me the one she's zipping through now, and the sight is faintly alarming. She has filled every other line and every other page with her rounded, honor-roll penmanship, leaving plenty of room for second thoughts and emendations. What's alarming is that there aren't any.

"I don't correct or rewrite," she says, "because I do all the correcting before I begin, getting it in my mind. And then when I pounce, I pounce. I can invent very easily. It really seems just to come through my hand." She waggles her arm in the air, as if it were being buffeted by winds, then lunges into a pile of papers on her desk. "Everything's a great mess here. I never have tidiness," she says, in a tone more disapproving of tidiness than of herself. She scoops up a pack of index cards. "These are notes," she says. "Something occurs to me or I see an incident or I hear a phrase. I make a note of that. Then I've got a bundle of notes before I begin my work, and I can go through them and read them, and it really starts me off on something. After that, it seems the experiences simply come. One becomes a magnet for the experience one is looking for."

Just now, she's beginning a novel about a movie director; her shelves are full of books about film, and she confesses that she's been having sleepless nights because she wants her character to be in the hospital after falling off a crane, and she's not sure directors get up on cranes anymore. One of her note cards reads "Never try to please the bourgeoisie lest you should succeed in doing merely that."

"This is the sort of thing that this man would say," she explains. "That's his sort of thing. But there comes a minute when I don't do any more notes. When I start to write, all I have is my character lists." Character lists? "Oh, yes," she says. "I need to have a sheet for every character: what they say, what they wear, who knows what, who knows whom, and what they do—various things. It's all cross-referenced. I have a page for everything that wriggles—human beings, dogs, ice cream. Then I can fit it all together."

Part of what makes her books so pleasurable is the way they let us fit it together with her. She lays out the jigsaw pieces over and over, and over and over we assemble them in our minds. But Spark is devilish: she keeps turning the puzzle while we build it, and as we watch ourselves get things wrong, we may recognize that once again Spark is revealing the fiction-making process itself. Finally, the coup de grâce: she refuses to cough up the final piece—she trusts her reader to catch on without it. Hence, we finish "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie" having been told everything about Sandy's betrayal except why it happens, and we finish "Memento Mori" knowing everything except the answer to the central mystery: who is making the disturbing telephone calls that tie the novel together—the telephone calls that counsel her elderly characters to "remember you must die."

"Lots of people can't take it when I leave things out," Spark says. "But lots of people can, of course. I think I've chosen that way because of something in my nature. I don't like to spell things out. I'm very much on the idea of leaving a lot unsaid, so that a great deal can be gathered. I hate having to explain the obvious."

And so she doesn't, which leaves most of her books trim and concentrated, pared down to an anorexic core. Some of them are so stark as to be nightmarish, especially the somewhat avant-garde ones she wrote in the late sixties and early seventies: "The Public Image" (1968), "The Driver's Seat" (1970), "Not to Disturb" (1971), and "The Hothouse by the East River" (1973)—macabre books in which Spark extended her tinkering with the borders between fiction and truth in order to tinker with the borders between life and death. In "Not to Disturb," for instance, we watch a group of plotting servants; they seem to be planning their masters' deaths. But Spark keeps hinting that there's more to her design than meets the eye, and pretty soon it becomes clear that the servants aren't really planning anything, that they somehow simply *know* that their masters will die before sunrise. After all, Spark is saying, the author knows the plot—why shouldn't she let the characters in on it? In a metafictional experiment like this one, the right tone is crucial, and Spark concocts a present-tense deadpan that is at once lyrical, extravagant, and gruesomely funny: "Meanwhile the lightning, which strikes the clump of elms so that the two friends huddled there are killed instantly without pain, zig-zags across the lawns, illuminating the lily-pond and the sunken rose garden like a self-stricken flash-photographer, and like a zip-fastener ripped from its garment by a sexual maniac, it is flung slapdash across Lake Leman and back to skim the rooftops of the house."

That sort of blithe little murder has led a lot of people to accuse Spark of cruelty—or, at least, of a chilling lack of sympathy for her own characters. But their accusation misses the point. "People say my novels are cruel because cruel things happen and I keep this even tone," Spark says. "I don't start to shake and yell. But cruel is a funny thing. I mean, you can't really be cruel, because characters aren't alive. Fiction is not the truth. It's an illusion. It's a kind of lie. People get the wrong impression about that."

This may at first seem a frivolous response. In essence, though, it's a religious one. Spark wants us to read her novels as parables. She is not a very submissive Catholic (she spends a lot of time, for instance, railing against the Pope's stand on birth control), but she never sits down to write without recognizing the correspondence between her act of creation and that of the Almighty. Whereas other novelists enter their invented worlds by an act of sympathetic imagination, plumbing their characters' psychologies as though from within, Spark's sympathetic imagination takes other forms. Her main character, finally, is God Himself. She never depicts Him on the page, but it is His imagination she attempts to enter and His viewpoint she takes on. To her omniscient eye, her own characters can appear shallow, perverse, or absurd, the way they might to a God who had created and then washed His hands of them; she even invents some that would seem utterly impossible were it not for the force with which she breathes them into being—for instance, the terrifying heroine of "The Driver's Seat," who convinces everyone around her that she's looking for a lover when in fact what she's really on the prowl for is someone who will murder her. Spark doesn't spend much time in church ("It's full of germs, people sneezing. I don't want to catch cold, you know"); the form her religious practice takes is novel-writing—creating fictional people, making them rejoice and suffer and die. One might say that the way she worships God is by trying to see things from His point of view.

And to her there is a value in that attempt which goes beyond the modernist awareness she gives us of fiction-making and its limits. For at the heart of what her critics call cruelty is an insistence that the world be seen as it is—that in the larger scheme of things a glance and a murder do carry something like the same weight. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," she says. "That's how the Bible puts it. I'm often very deadpan, but there's a moral statement, too, and what it's saying is that there's a life beyond this, and these events are not the most important things. They're not important in the long run. You don't know why the things that happen happen."

Another spooky stare into space.

"You have to live with the mystery," she says. "That's the answer in my books." ♦

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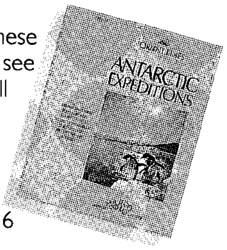

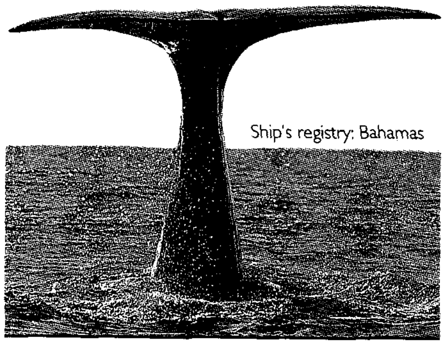
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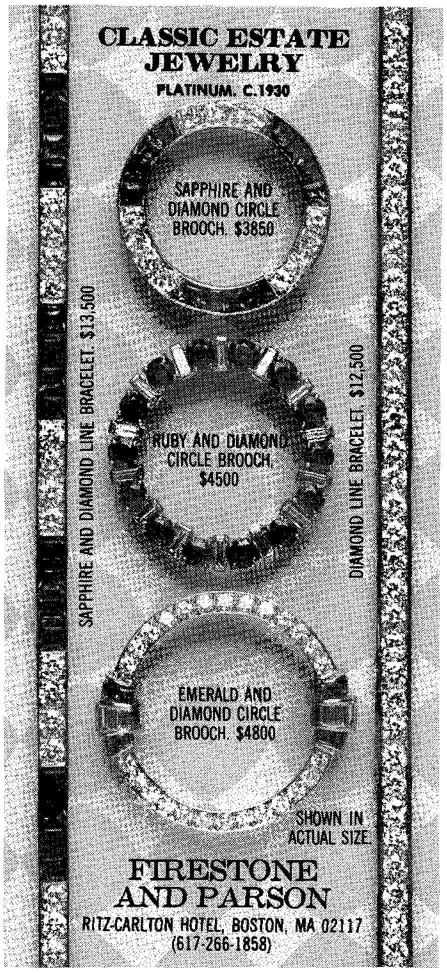

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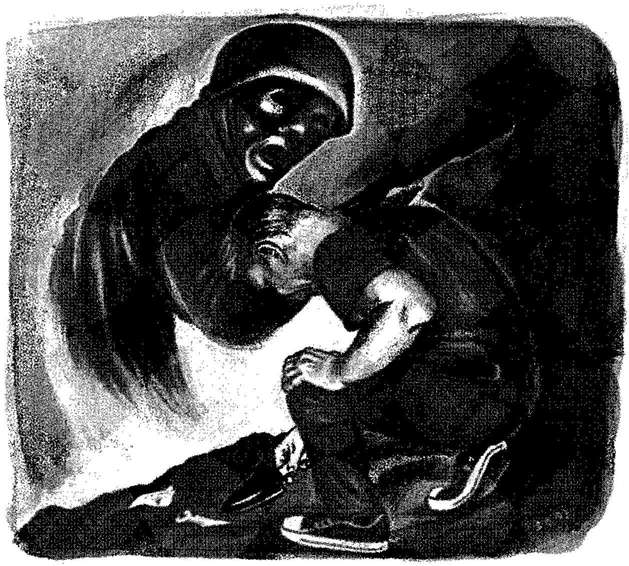
LETTER FROM VIETNAM

PRISONERS OF THE PAST

Despite sound reasons to end the embargo and make peace with Vietnam, the P.O.W./M.I.A. lobby has made Bill Clinton and United States foreign policy captive to ghosts of the war.

BY NEIL SHEEHAN



SUE COE

"NORMALIZATION" with the United States has become an obsession in Vietnam. When my wife, Susan, and I arrived in Saigon this January, the Vietnamese and the growing foreign community in the city were hanging on George Bush's last days in office. He had eased the economic embargo in mid-December in response to Vietnam's coöperation in resolving the fate of Americans missing in action from the war, permitting American businesses to open offices and negotiate contracts that would go into effect when the embargo ended. Saigon was full of rumors that he would follow through and lift the embargo entirely. A young American attempting to start a marketing-and-consulting business got excited when he noticed a crew cleaning up the grounds of the six-story fortress that had been the United States Embassy, and painting the front of the ground floor. A British banker had an unimpeachable source in Washington who said that the President was about to sign the executive order. Then Inauguration Day arrived, and it was clear that all George Bush was going to do was to leave Vietnam to Bill Clinton. The disappointment was so keen it was almost tangible. (The former Embassy was merely being spruced up for a movie on the war being shot by a South Korean film company.)

The Vietnamese will have to wait for Bill Clinton, too. American policy remains hung up on the hatred and anger left over from the war, hobbled by the P.O.W./M.I.A. lobby and the myth that captured Americans are still being held alive in secret prisons. Over the years, Pentagon investigators have looked into more than sixteen hundred so-called "live sightings" of American prisoners in Indochina. Except for approximately three hundred "sightings" of Robert Garwood, a marine who joined the Vietcong ranks (he returned voluntarily to the United States in 1979), not a single report has proved truthful. Yet, twenty years after the United States withdrew the last of its combat forces from Vietnam, the myth persists. A March fund-raising letter from the respectable element in the lobby, the thirty-eight-hundred-member National League of P.O.W./M.I.A. Families, appeals for contributions on behalf of "America's P.O.W./M.I.A.s who served in the Vietnam War—and may still be serving." In mid-April, just as it appeared that the Clinton Administration might ease the embargo further by letting Vietnam clear its old debt to the International Monetary Fund, thus making the country eligible for future international development loans, the legend took a new and yet more bizarre turn. Stephen J. Morris, a researcher at the Russian Research Center at Harvard, gave the New York *Times* an alleged Soviet intelligence report that said the Vietnamese Communists had been holding roughly twice as many American prisoners of war—twelve hundred and five—as they released when the United States withdrew, under the Paris Agreement of January, 1973. The publication lit a verbal firestorm, with renewed outcries against Vietnamese duplicity and an accusation that the Hanoi authorities had murdered the hidden prisoners.

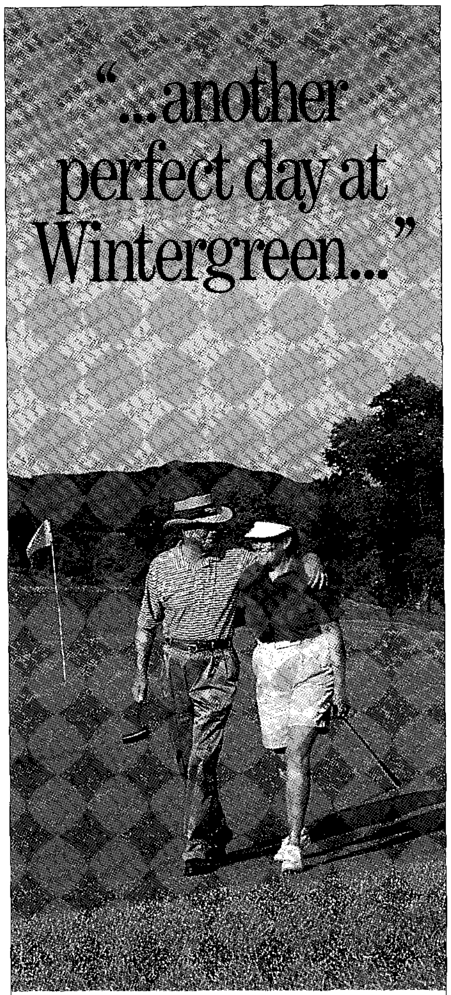
The P.O.W./M.I.A. myth had its origin during the war, in a political gambit by Richard Nixon. To buy time and divert attention from the fact that instead of ending the war he was trying to win it through his strategy of "Vietnamization"—gradually shifting the burden of the fighting from the United States to the Saigon regime's forces—Nixon launched a campaign to focus public hatred on the Vietnamese for holding American prisoners. For a time, the gambit worked brilliantly. Some of the public seemed to be under the impression that the President was prosecuting the war solely to free the P.O.W.s, rather than adding to their numbers, lengthening their detention, and getting twenty-one thousand additional Americans killed by prolonging the conflict. In the end, the gambit backfired, and one of the reasons Nixon had to sign the Paris Agreement was to get the prisoners back in Operation Homecoming, when five hundred and ninety-one P.O.W.s were released. There was legitimate uncertainty, however, over whether a few downed airmen might have been left behind in the wilds of Laos, and the lies and poisoned atmosphere of the war created the suspicion that many had been abandoned to their fate in Communist prisons.

In succeeding years, military review boards investigated every case of those listed as missing in action, and determined that all were dead. Only one airman, Captain Charles Shelton, shot down over Laos in April of 1965, continues to be carried as a P.O.W.—"for symbolic purposes," in the explanation of the Defense Department—even though many reports indicate that Shelton probably died in captivity in the nineteen-sixties. (Cruel hope apparently did not help his wife, Marian, who shot herself in 1990. Their oldest son, Charles Shelton, Jr., a Roman Catholic priest, says he believes his father is alive and living in the United States, smuggled into the country by the Pentagon under the federal witness-protection program.)

The public kept receiving a different impression. First the Ford and then the Carter Administration found the failure of Vietnam to "give us a full and complete accounting of our missing-in-action," in the words of Gerald Ford, a convenient reason not to recognize the country, and to enforce the embargo. (No mention was ever made of the fact that the Vietnamese had hundreds of thousands of missing in action of their own, for whom they will never be able to account.) The numbers were doubled by a sleight of hand in accounting. During the war, unaccounted-for men were carried in two categories: Killed-in-Action/Body-Not-Recovered, for men who were known to have perished, and Missing-in-Action, for men whose fate was uncertain. Both categories, which had been roughly equal during the war, were lumped together, and the public continued to be told, as the news media dutifully repeated the number without examining it, that approximately twenty-four hundred Americans were still "Missing-in-Action."

Thriller novels, purported exposés, and "Rambo" films nurtured the myth and the anger over the lost war. For an hour and a half, Americans could sit in a movie theatre and see P.O.W.s rescued and the war won as their vicious Asian captors were gunned down. The Vietnamese also played into the hands of the P.O.W./M.I.A. movement by manipulating the issue for their own reasons—initially, to try to get some of the $4.75 billion in postwar aid that Nixon had held out to them in a secret codicil to the Paris Agreement. After they gave up on the aid, the Vietnamese stored remains and doled out bones to keep a dialogue going with the United States, because Washington was not interested in discussing any other subject. It was in Vietnam's national interest to clear up uncertainties in individual cases, but the Old Guard leadership who ran the country during the "Drunk with Victory" decade after the war, as the Vietnamese now call it, did not perceive the nation's interest clearly. Instead of dispelling suspicion, Hanoi deceived and withheld information.

When Ronald Reagan was inaugu-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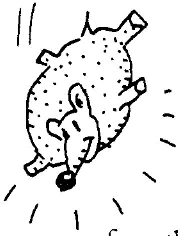
rated in 1981, the hope of liberating living prisoners was given Presidential sponsorship. The P.O.W./M.I.A. issue was raised to a "matter of highest national priority," as Reagan described it, and Ann Mills Griffiths, the executive director of the National League of P.O.W./M.I.A. Families, was made a member of a special Inter-Agency Group under the National Security Council.



The United States is currently spending at least a hundred million dollars a year on P.O.W./M.I.A. efforts. The politics of the issue drove the Bush Administration to revive the wartime post of Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for P.O.W./M.I.A. Affairs in 1991 and, at the beginning of last year, to activate a new military organization, called Joint Task Force-Full Accounting, commanded by an Army major general. The military, which can hardly be blamed for the expense of what it was ordered to undertake, set about briskly trying to fulfill its mission. The J.T.F.-F.A. conducts searches of records and travels around Vietnam, where the major portion of the work is being done, and Cambodia and Laos, questioning villagers and former soldiers on the other side and excavating possible grave sites and crash sites. Roughly three hundred and fifty servicemen, servicewomen, and civilians, such as intelligence specialists, are assigned or regularly attached to the task force, and several hundred more are working on P.O.W./M.I.A. affairs in other elements of the Pacific Command, higher up in the Pentagon, and elsewhere overseas.

The rent on the three-acre compound in Hanoi, dubbed The Ranch, that the Vietnam detachment uses for office and living quarters is $145,200 a year, paid to the Vietnamese government. Almost all the food is flown in from Thailand on an Air Force C-130 transport once a week. Currently, about seventeen people are working in Hanoi, under an Army lieutenant colonel. In addition, two three-man archival-research teams are going through records in Danang and Saigon. Seven ten-man teams spend a month surveying and excavating sites, then leave for a month in Hawaii to rest and evaluate results, then return for another month in Vietnam. In Hanoi and in the field, the Americans work with a counterpart Vietnamese organization known as the Vietnamese Office for Seeking Missing Persons. The Vietnamese cannot afford to finance the effort on their side, and so the V.N.O.S.M.P. is essentially funded by the United States as well. The Joint Task Force equips its people with everything from boots to machetes to computers for its office in Hanoi. The United States pays the Hanoi authorities as much as forty dollars a day—a handsome sum for a Vietnamese official—for the services of some V.N.O.S.M.P. members when they are out with American teams. The Defense Department is also paying a civilian spinoff of the Vietnamese Air Force, called Service Flight Corporation of Vietnam, to ferry the teams to crash and grave sites around the country in old Soviet-model MI-8 helicopters. Bringing the seven teams into the country for a month's operations runs "five hundred thousand dollars a pop," according to Ann Mills Griffiths.

The families of the dead are entitled to some sort of accounting. The question is at what price. In 1992, the teams recovered fifty-eight remains. Most are believed to be those of American servicemen, although not all may prove identifiable. At a hundred million dollars a year, each remains costs $1.7 million. The number of American remains identified in 1992 was far fewer—seven—because the process is a laborious one that can take from three months to several years. Forensic specialists at the Army's Central Identification Laboratory, in Hawaii, have to sort out and put together a jigsaw puzzle of bone and teeth fragments. Their findings then have to be accepted. After one widow refused to accept identified remains as the bones of her husband, the Army began allowing families to hire outside consultants, at government expense, to review the work of the laboratory's staff.

Nor can the price be measured simply in money. The J.T.F.-F.A. has learned of enough sites to keep it going for at least two more years, and expects to discover additional sites during that time. General John W. Vessey, Jr., a retired Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who has devoted himself to settling the P.O.W./M.I.A. problem—first as the envoy of President Reagan, then of Bush, and now of Clinton—predicts that it will take anywhere from five to twenty years to investigate all possible sites and run down the last details on the missing. Flying in helicopters and excavating crash and grave sites in the terrain and weather of Indochina is inherently unhealthy and dangerous. So far, there have been only a few cases of malaria, but it is highly probable that sooner or later people will be seriously injured or killed.

There is also a question of whether it is not bizarre, perhaps even morally obscene—and an insult to the bravery of the dead—to spend so much money searching for bones in a country where children die for want of antibiotics, and thousands of amputees from the war, many of them former Saigon-government soldiers who fought on the American side, hobble on crutches or go armless, because they cannot afford prosthetic devices. United States aid to Vietnam for prosthetic devices in fiscal 1992 was a million dollars—less than the cost of retrieving a single remains. The United States contributed $1.5 million more for assistance to displaced and orphaned children and $245,000 for disaster relief from typhoon flooding.

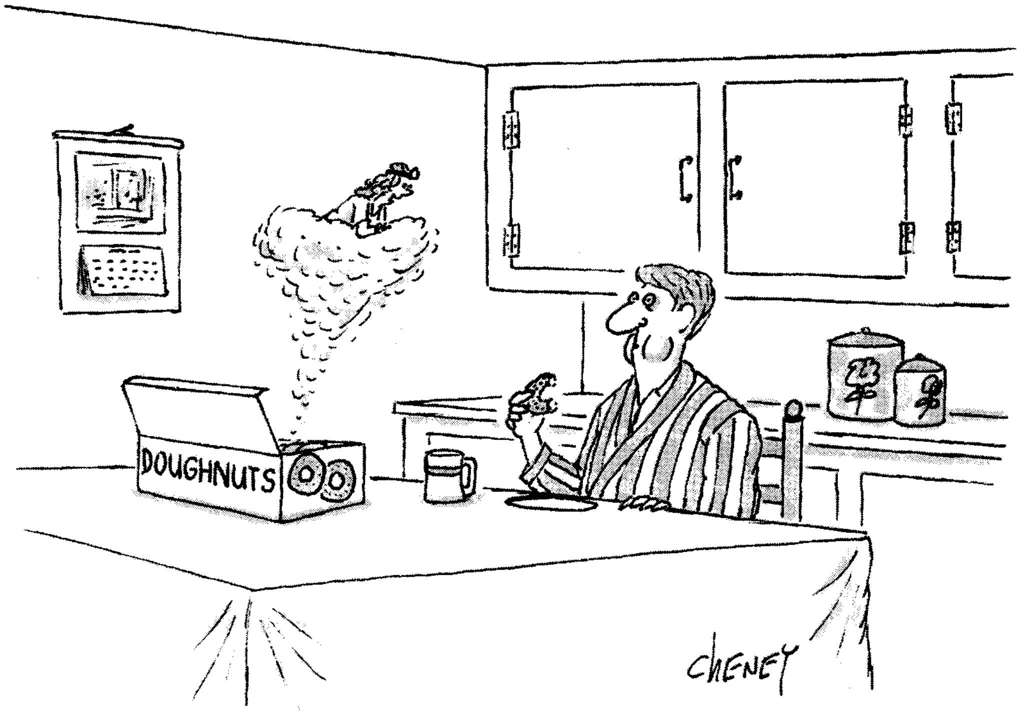
Moreover, the work of the Joint Task Force has not been bringing satisfaction to the P.O.W./M.I.A. lobby. Lieutenant Colonel Jack Donovan, the commander of the detachment in Hanoi, was recently quoted as saying the Vietnamese "are bending over backward to help us," yet Ann Mills Griffiths dismisses as meaningless both what the task force is doing and its assertion that it is receiving unprecedented coöperation from the Vietnamese. "They are allowed to go to the field and run around," she says. "They can report a number of activities. They count the canteen cups." She added that many of the remains the task force recovers in the field are unidentifiable—"a lot of ash and trash"—because, she says, the Vietnamese have already dug up the grave sites and retrieved the remains. Ms. Griffiths said that after the war the Hanoi authorities went around systematically collecting American remains and still have "hundreds" in storage which "they could easily repatriate." Told that the Vietnamese deny this, she said, "They're lying through their teeth." As manipulative as the Vietnamese can be, they are a shrewd people. It is difficult to imagine that the leadership would forfeit the great benefits of normalization and store bones now just to enable a clique of officials to make money out of the United States military.

Nevertheless, by mid-April the number of American missing in action that mattered had dwindled from the twenty-four-hundred figure to two hundred and forty-four so-called "discrepancy cases." These are cases where, although service review boards long ago declared the men dead, the Pentagon decided to take a second look, because circumstances raised the theoretical possibility, however slim, that the men could have survived and might still be alive today. The Senate Select Committee on P.O.W./M.I.A. Affairs, chaired by John Kerry, of Massachusetts, a decorated Vietnam veteran, had concluded a fifteen-month search with a report this January stating there were no "grounds for encouragement" that any of the two hundred and forty-four men are alive. Investigators from the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency had also resolved forty-three of a hundred and thirty-five Vietnamese cases with a finding of death. (Most of the research effort has gone into the Vietnamese cases. There are ninety more discrepancy cases in Laos and nineteen in Cambodia.) Their Vietnamese counterparts wanted to close ninety-six of the hundred and thirty-five cases, but the American investigators tend to keep them open in order to be able to say to the families that, as one investigator put it, "we have gone the extra mile."

A delegation headed by Edmund Muskie, the former senator and Secretary of State in the Carter Administration, had flown to Hanoi in the first half of April and gained a promise of access to the files of the General Political Directorate of the Vietnamese Army. These files contain the interrogations of P.O.W.s and other information that investigators want in order to resolve more of the discrepancy cases. The announcement of this new coöperation was to be made after General Vessey, the President's P.O.W./M.I.A. envoy, arrived in Hanoi on a scheduled visit on April 18th. Secretary of State Warren Christopher had made a conciliatory statement. The last official obstacle to making peace with Vietnam, the so-called "live-P.O.W. issue" that the discrepancy cases represent, was beginning to fade from the scene. The Administration was prepared to permit a settling of Vietnam's debt in the I.M.F. meeting at the end of the month. Then Stephen Morris, an Australian intellectual whose writings display consistent hostility to the Vietnamese, gave the alleged Soviet intelligence document to Celestine Bohlen, of the Moscow bureau of the *Times.*

MS. BOHLEN'S front-page story from Moscow in the *Times* of Monday, April 12th, created the impression that she was writing about a real, *Vietnamese* document. "A document described as a top secret report written by a senior North Vietnamese general and delivered to the Communist Party Politburo in Hanoi in September 1972 says that North Vietnam was holding 1,205 American prisoners of war," her story began. "The report, which has been authenticated by leading experts and has been circulated among United States government officials, is being called by some of those experts a 'smoking gun' that proves Hanoi has been withholding information about the fate of American prisoners of war in Vietnam. . . . The author of the report, General Tran Van Quang, then Deputy Chief of Staff of the North Vietnamese Army, said in the document: '1,205 American prisoners of war located in the prisons of North Vietnam—this is a big number.' " She quoted Mr. Morris as saying, "This is the biggest hostage-taking in the history of American foreign policy."

Only by carefully reading Ms. Bohlen's story in its entirety could one discern that what she apparently had been given was a Soviet intelligence report that purported to be a translation of a briefing by General Quang. Moreover, it turned out that the "leading experts" she cited as authenticating the document were not independent specialists on Vietnam. Rather, they were Sovietologists like Zbigniew Brzezinski, who, according to Mr. Morris, told him that the document he had found in the Moscow archives of the Central Committee of the former Soviet Communist Party was a genuine Soviet intelligence report. As anyone who has dealt with intelligence reports quickly learns, they can be accurate, they can be partially flawed, or



"Hi! I'm Coagula, the goddess of arterial plaque."

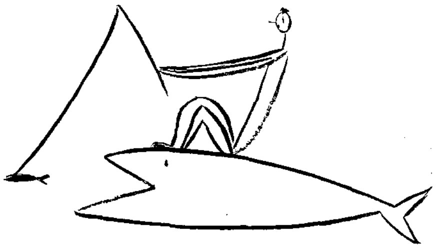
they can be totally fallacious, because sources sometimes concoct information to collect a fee.

On the basis of this uncertain evidence, the Vietnamese were immediately found guilty and condemned. In an interview with the *Times* printed in the next day's edition, Mr. Brzezinski, a Polish-born Russophobe long antagonistic to the Vietnamese, because he considered them pawns of the Soviets (he approved China's invasion of Vietnam in 1979, when he was President Carter's national-security adviser), drew a parallel with Stalin's mass execution of thousands of Polish officers in the Katyn Forest, near Smolensk, in 1940. He said that after studying the document he believed that "the great likelihood is that the Vietnamese took hundreds of American officers out and shot them in cold blood, in a massacre like the one in the Katyn woods." He repeated his accusation—"with sadness and reluctance," he said—on the "MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour" that evening, and said he thought the United States had "the right to ask the present Vietnamese government to place those responsible in war-crimes trials."

Henry Kissinger, who has never forgiven the Vietnamese for outwitting him at the negotiations in Paris, appeared with Mr. Brzezinski on the same program. He was considerably more cautious, saying he had "no way of judging" Mr. Brzezinski's hypothesis of mass execution, because he did not understand why the Vietnamese "would want to hold prisoners that they didn't acknowledge." But, he added, "if that document is authentic, and it is hard to imagine who would have forged it, for what purpose, then I think an enormous crime has been committed." Mr. Morris, the leadoff guest on the program, said he could vouch that the document was a "genuine" translation of a report given to the Vietnamese Politburo, because General Pyotr Ivashutin, chief of Soviet military intelligence for twenty-five years, had signed an accompanying summary. "Now, the fact that he signed off on this suggests that the Soviet leadership believed that this was an authentic Vietnamese document, and I am one who has greatest respect for the professional competence of Soviet military intelligence," Mr. Morris said.

The document is suspect as a Soviet intelligence report; as a Vietnamese document, it is almost certainly fiction. To begin with, General Tran Van Quang was not Deputy Chief of Staff of the North Vietnamese Army in September, 1972. He had been Deputy Chief of Staff in 1959-60, and he was reappointed to the post in 1974, but at the time he was supposed to be giving the briefing, and for seven years prior to that, he was commander of the battlefront along the former demarcation line between North and South Vietnam, far below Hanoi. In his purported briefing to the Politburo, General Quang speaks of secret meetings with a South Vietnamese general named Ngo Dinh Dzu. There was no such man. The figure whose activities are described in the document is a composite of a South Vietnamese general named Ngo Dzu and a Saigon lawyer who ran for President named Truong Dinh Dzu, both of whom I knew. An event that the General Quang of the purported September, 1972, briefing refers to several times as having occurred in the past—the Twenty-third Plenum of the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Communist Party—did not take place until December, 1974. In a small but telling detail, Quang is said to be a lieutenant general—a rank he did not acquire until 1974.

The North Vietnamese prison system for American P.O.W.s portrayed in the report bears little relationship to the system in which the P.O.W.s lived and which they described after they were released in 1973. For example, the document says that the prisoners were strictly segregated by rank in different prisons, with "special prisons" for the most senior. They were not: there were different prisons, but United States prisoners of all ranks were mixed within them. The report says that after the unsuccessful United States attempt in 1970 to rescue P.O.W.s held at Son Tay, northwest of Hanoi, the prisoners were dispersed from four large prisons into eleven smaller ones. The opposite occurred: they were concentrated. The report says that all prisoners were being held in the North. They were not: some were still in rain-forest prison camps in Cambodia, near its border with the South. The numbers do not make sense, either. The report says that six hundred and twenty-four aviators had been captured in North Vietnam as of September, 1972—a hundred and fifty-seven more than Defense Department records show was possible.



A North Vietnamese general giving a briefing like this to the Politburo would have made his audience wonder about his state of mind. There is also only a certain level of incompetence one can plausibly ascribe to an intelligence service. At a time when their country was engaged in a huge military-aid program to Vietnam, could the Soviet military-intelligence officers in Hanoi not have known who the Vietnamese Deputy Chief of Staff was, or have accepted references to a Plenum that hadn't occurred, or have credited the existence of General Ngo Dinh Dzu when the doings of the two real Dzus were reported in the Western press?

THE demise of the Soviet Union has, paradoxically, given Vietnam a strategic usefulness to the United States that it never had during a war in which fifty-eight thousand Americans perished. The Soviet collapse has created a power vacuum in East Asia. The American withdrawal from the Philippines and the shrinking of the United States military because of the end of the Cold War and economic troubles at home are contributing to the sense of a power vacuum. This may be more perception than reality, since the United States retains the air and naval capability to assert itself in East Asia, but perception has a reality of its own. The Chinese perceive it, and they are intent on filling the vacuum.

Southern China is an economic astonishment. Guangdong Province's economy, for example, grew at an average annual rate of fifteen per cent from 1981 to 1991. The Chinese are using their new wealth to make themselves the big military power in the region. They are creating a sophisticated Air Force, purchasing long-range Sukhoi-27 fighter-bombers, MIG-31 interceptors, and airborne surveillance-and-control planes from Russia. They are bringing their Army up to date with Russia's latest T-72 main-battle tanks. Beijing is also building a "blue water" Navy to project force beyond China's shores, negotiating with Russia and Ukraine for an aircraft carrier that was under construction at a Soviet shipyard.

Like it or not, the United States is going to have to play the role of regional balancer—the guarantor of stability in the last resort—to keep China from unsettling East Asia in the post-Cold War era. There is too much to lose for us to refuse the role. Americans tend to view their current relationship with Asia as a one-way drain of cash to Japan. The street has lanes that go in both directions. American two-way trade with Asia and the Pacific exceeded $360 billion in 1992, and roughly 2.6 million jobs in the United States are dependent on it. United States exports to the region amount to about $138 billion a year. The United States exports more to Singapore than it does to Spain or Italy, and American firms have about $66 billion invested in that part of the world.

Lifting the economic embargo, opening diplomatic relations, and backing the cause of economic reform in Vietnam to strengthen the country by quickening its development would serve the American need to counter Chinese regional ambitions. The relationship suits the Vietnamese, because big nations that do not threaten their independence, as the United States no longer does, are the kinds of friends the Vietnamese want. The Vietnamese assume, rightly or wrongly, that the more involved American business is in Vietnam, the more China will hesitate to move against them. Tom Vallely, a Harvard Vietnam specialist, who first went to the country as a nineteen-year-old Marine infantryman and is now trying to help the Vietnamese shift to a market economy, quipped, "One Mobil oil rig in the South China Sea is worth the whole Seventh Fleet."

The looming threat of China propels the Vietnamese attempt to make peace with the United States. When Deng Xiaoping invaded Vietnam in 1979, after the Vietnamese drove China's Cambodian protégé, the homicidal Khmer Rouge, out of Phnom Penh, Vietnamese troops were able to halt the Chinese rapidly and bloody them badly, because they were in excellent fighting trim. Yet the ultimate checkrein on Chinese behavior that has since vanished was the threat of Soviet retaliation. The Vietnamese also relied on the Soviet Union for their weaponry. With their benefactor now history, Vietnamese armament has become outmoded.

While Vietnam has made peace with China and full trade and diplomatic relations have resumed, the Chinese seem to want more: they seem to want submission. The visit to Vietnam last December of Li Peng, the Chinese premier, went badly. Peng behaved as if he were visiting a tributary. China has so far been the winner in Cambodia, because its cat's-paw, the Khmer Rouge, has succeeded in sabotaging the United Nations peace plan and once again constitutes a menace to the Vietnamese.

The Vietnamese feel most vulnerable in the Spratly Archipelago, in the South China Sea, where the Chinese have been conducting a campaign of progressive annexation. The prize, vital to Vietnam's development, is oil and natural gas that are believed to lie in great quantity under the archipelago's barren islands and reefs.

Last year, the Chinese tightened the ratchet. At the beginning of the year, China passed a law declaring the whole of the South China Sea and all its islands, including some more than nine hundred miles distant, Chinese territory. The Chinese then occupied two more islets in the Spratlys, and in May signed a contract with an American oil company, the Crestone Energy Corporation, to explore for oil in a block right next to the current Vietnamese offshore fields. Alarmed at the Chinese expansionism (the Philippines, Malaysia, and Taiwan also hold positions in the Spratlys), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) issued a declaration last July calling for peaceful settlement of claims and urged a continued United States military presence in the area. Vietnam endorsed the position, but China pointedly declined to rule out the use of force. The Vietnamese have the largest claim in the Spratlys, and garrison twenty-one islands and reefs with several thousand soldiers, seamen, and technicians. (China currently holds nine.) With their rudimentary air and naval capabilities, they have no hope of holding on if the Chinese launch an all-out assault. The

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expectation is that unless Beijing decides the United States will let it behave with impunity, China will not act rashly; rather, it will gradually increase coercion to try to get the Vietnamese to surrender the islands, or will take them bit by bit. Obtaining the oil and gas for itself and keeping Vietnam weak economically by denying it energy resources both serve China's purpose.

SLOW internal economic growth is another potential security problem that the Vietnamese face, precisely because the big power to the north is growing so rapidly. Not that Vietnam is standing still. "Market-economy socialism"—hardly a term to be found in the writings of Marx and Lenin (or of Ho Chi Minh, for that matter)—has become the avowed goal of the Vietnamese Communist Party, under the policy, adopted in 1986, of Doi Moi, or Renovation. The change is striking: Saigon is like an engine revving up. A surge of construction has new hotels rising and offices and houses being renovated to rent to the foreign businessmen moving in—mostly Taiwanese and Singaporeans, South Koreans, and Japanese. Toyota has opened a glassy showroom to display its latest models. The director of the Rex Hotel, Dao Huu Loan, a Northerner with initiative, had by 1989 transformed into the best hotel in town the office building and bachelor officers' quarters where the "Five O'Clock Follies"—the afternoon military briefing—was held during the war. He has since absorbed an adjacent old hotel, making it a new wing, to give himself a total of two hundred and seven rooms, and is about to expand again, adding four hundred more rooms where three American-era movie theatres and a French-era garage linger at the rear of the block. The billboard advertisements one sees up and down Saigon's broad avenues from the roof terrace of the Rex, where American officers once charcoal-grilled steaks and hamburgers, no longer feature just the ubiquitous TVs and boom boxes. They now also advertise office facilities, computer equipment, mobile phones, and DHL, the international package service.

While poverty can be seen everywhere, if the number and volume of firecrackers set off to celebrate Tet, the lunar New Year holiday, this January are any indication, then a lot of Vietnamese are feeling that life is getting better. The firecrackers are thought to keep demons and evil spirits, who cannot bear light and noise, from intruding on the holiday, and if all your firecrackers explode sharply you will have good luck and prosperity in the New Year. People were setting off the firecrackers on sidewalks, in the middle of streets and parks, and by hanging Chinese-style strings, with a big cracker that booms like a mini-cannon every ten or fifteen regular-size bangers, on poles from windows and balconies. Roman candles swooshed across the Rex roof terrace at night. Bats, whose sonar guidance system was being deranged by the noise, screamed as they swooped around buildings and under awnings.

The big numbers on Vietnam's economy also add up to significant change. Statistics are suspect, because so much occurs off the books and the country is still in the ballpoint-pen and carbon-paper age, but there is agreement that the economy has grown in each of the past three years by from five to six per cent. Vietnam has become the world's third-largest rice exporter, after the United States and Thailand. It has also become an oil-exporting nation, producing 5.4 million tons, worth $770 million last year, from the offshore wells in the South China Sea. (The Vietnamese expect to be pumping ten million tons a year by the end of the century.) The country had a trade surplus in 1992. Nearly two billion dollars in new foreign-investment projects were approved, the biggest share from Taiwan, because the Japanese have been hanging back in deference to the American economic embargo. They will not hang back in the future. Japan announced last November that it was resuming government aid to Vietnam and will no longer respect the United States boycott as far as Japanese trade and investment are concerned.

The country remains, nevertheless, in the twilight between a market economy and the socialist system of the past. If Vietnam keeps growing at its current pace, it will do somewhat better than India but will not emulate the "Little Tigers of Asia" that the Vietnamese envy—Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, and South Korea—or the remarkable growth of southern China. The dilemma the Vietnamese Communists face is that they need fast economic growth to maintain long-term political stability, but the hesitant consensus within the Party leadership does not yet really trust the free market. Private enterprise is being forced to rise on its own resources. Government policy continues to favor state-owned firms. Most bank loans go to state enterprises. Large private companies in the Saigon area—creditworthy and well-connected ones, with thousands of employees—cannot obtain the medium-term (one-to-three-year) foreign-currency loans they require to expand. Vietnam needs more than the international development loans for infrastructure that a lifting of the American embargo would bring. Its leadership also needs the confidence that would come with an end to tension and the lingering sense of isolation.

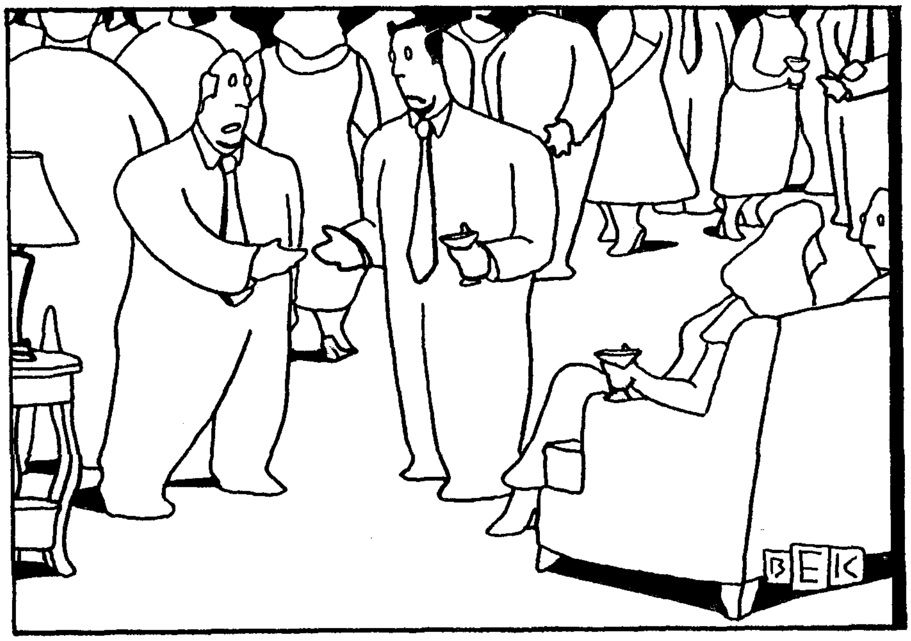
IN the meantime, some of the by-products of living in the twilight zone are compounding the country's difficulties. The social conscience, doctrinaire though it may have been, that distinguished the Vietnamese Communists from their opponents is being lost—a casualty of the transition to a market economy. Corruption does not compare with that of the former Saigon regime, where anything was for sale, but it has become serious enough so that everyone talks about it. The root cause is the state's unwillingness to raise government salaries, for fear of renewing inflation, which has been brought more or less under control at about twenty per cent. No official can live on what he or she earns. When government employees complain, the tacit response from the top seems to be "Don't complain, start your own business."

The police in Saigon have gone into the business of protecting crime. Italian-style purse, camera, and necklace snatching by thieves who swoop past on motorcycles has come into vogue, because the police get a share of the loot. One incident last fall demonstrated who was in cahoots with whom. The German Minister for Post and Telecommunications came to the country on an official visit, first to Hanoi and then to Saigon.

He was warned by Bonn's consul-general in the city to be careful of his wallet if he went out at night. He didn't listen. The Hanoi authorities had assigned him a bodyguard because of his rank, but the bodyguard was not trained to watch out for light-fingered Saigonese. The minister got his pocket picked. The embarrassment was too much for the Vietnamese. Someone important screamed at the Saigon police. Finally, at Tan Son Nhat Airport, as the minister was leaving the country, he was handed back his wallet, with all his credit cards and cash intact. The police corruption has its sinister aspects. Prostitution is growing in Saigon, because the police get a rakeoff. AIDS has come, prostitution is spreading it, and most Vietnamese hospitals lack the means for screening blood. A clique of security officials got caught not long ago running a travel agency for Hong Kong Chinese who flew to Vietnam for sex vacations.

For potential foreign investors, one of the great attractions of Vietnam is its educated work force: the Vietnamese Communists prided themselves on providing schools for all. Now education is becoming privatized willy-nilly. Because their salaries are ludicrously low, teachers are demanding supplementary payments from parents to enroll children in supposedly public primary and secondary schools. In Saigon and Hanoi and the other population centers, the quality of the school varies with the fee: the teachers in the best schools are able to command the highest fees. Not everyone can afford to pay, of course, and the level of learning is on the decline among the urban poor and in the countryside. The Vietnamese-American wife of a United Nations official in Saigon has had high-school teachers come around and ask if they can work for her as a housemaid.

Even the Vietnam People's Army is becoming a commercial institution. Army trucks haul materials to construction sites in Saigon. The soldiers driving them wear civilian clothes; the license plates reveal the owner of the trucks. The military inherited all sorts of real estate around the country from the war and is exploiting it to make money. The newest and best hotel in Danang, the port city and former United States Marine base on the central coast, is run by the Army. The Marine press center in Danang, where I stayed as a war correspondent, has been turned into a fish-processing plant. Thailand has an Army that is heavily into commerce, too, but Thailand does not share a border with China. Vietnam does, and therefore needs an Army that is primarily in the business of staying fit to fight.



"I'm a wunderkind slash flop."

• •

SOME members of the new Clinton Administration are concerned about an assertive China and see wisdom in an arrangement with Vietnam. The P.O.W./M.I.A. myth and its lobby keep them in check. Even before the appearance of Stephen Morris's Soviet document, one official spoke of having to "nudge" normalization with Vietnam "carefully forward without stirring up a hornet's nest." There is another complicating factor: "Bill Clinton is President of the United States," this official put it. In one of the many contradictions of American political life, a moral objection to a bad war gains a politician no credit. Knowing this, Bill Clinton plays down his objection to the Vietnam War and his avoidance of the draft as a young man. Now that he is dealing with Vietnam, the same official said, "He cannot afford to look like a wimp." The Vietnamese, who often read American culture better than Americans realize, knew that lifting the embargo would be easier for a right-wing figure like George Bush, who had fulfilled the American rite of going into harm's way as a torpedo-bomber pilot in the Second World War.

The reception the President gave the findings of John Vessey seemed to confirm the Vietnamese reading. General Vessey returned from Hanoi to announce that, except for one small fact involving the release of three pilots in 1972 in a propaganda ploy, everything in the Soviet document concerning P.O.W.s was wrong. But when Mr. Clinton was asked at a press conference on April 23rd for his attitude toward normalization and easing the embargo, he hedged. "What I would have to be convinced of is that we had gone a long way toward resolving every case that could be resolved at this moment in time," the President said. "And I confess to being much more heavily influenced by the families of the people whose lives were lost there, *or whose lives remain in question*, than by the commercial interest and the other things which seem so compelling in this moment." (Italics added.) The Administration postponed the vote of the International Monetary Fund until June, in the hope that the political atmosphere will improve in the meantime. If American policy toward Vietnam is ever to serve American interests, Bill Clinton and the United States government will have to break free of the last fantasy of the war. ♦

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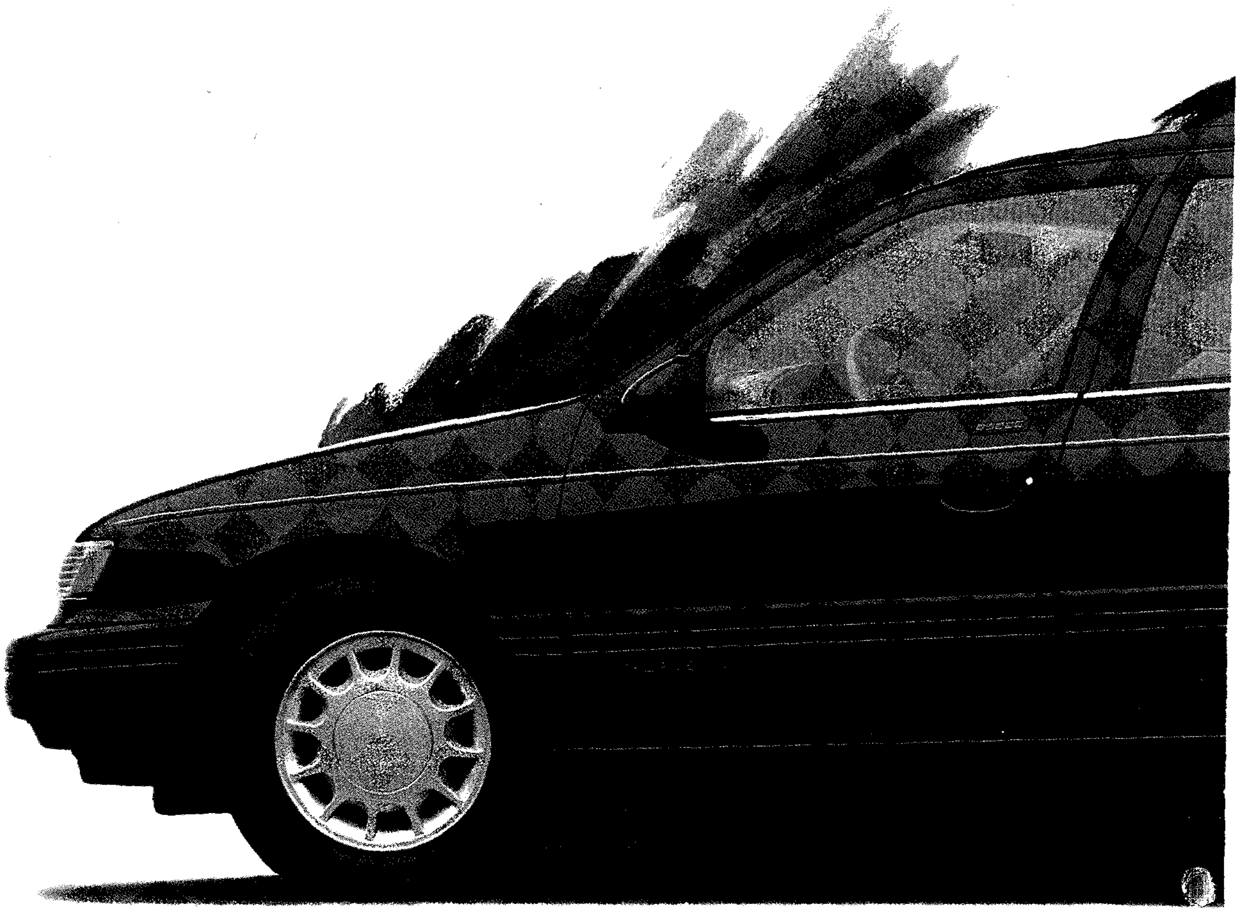

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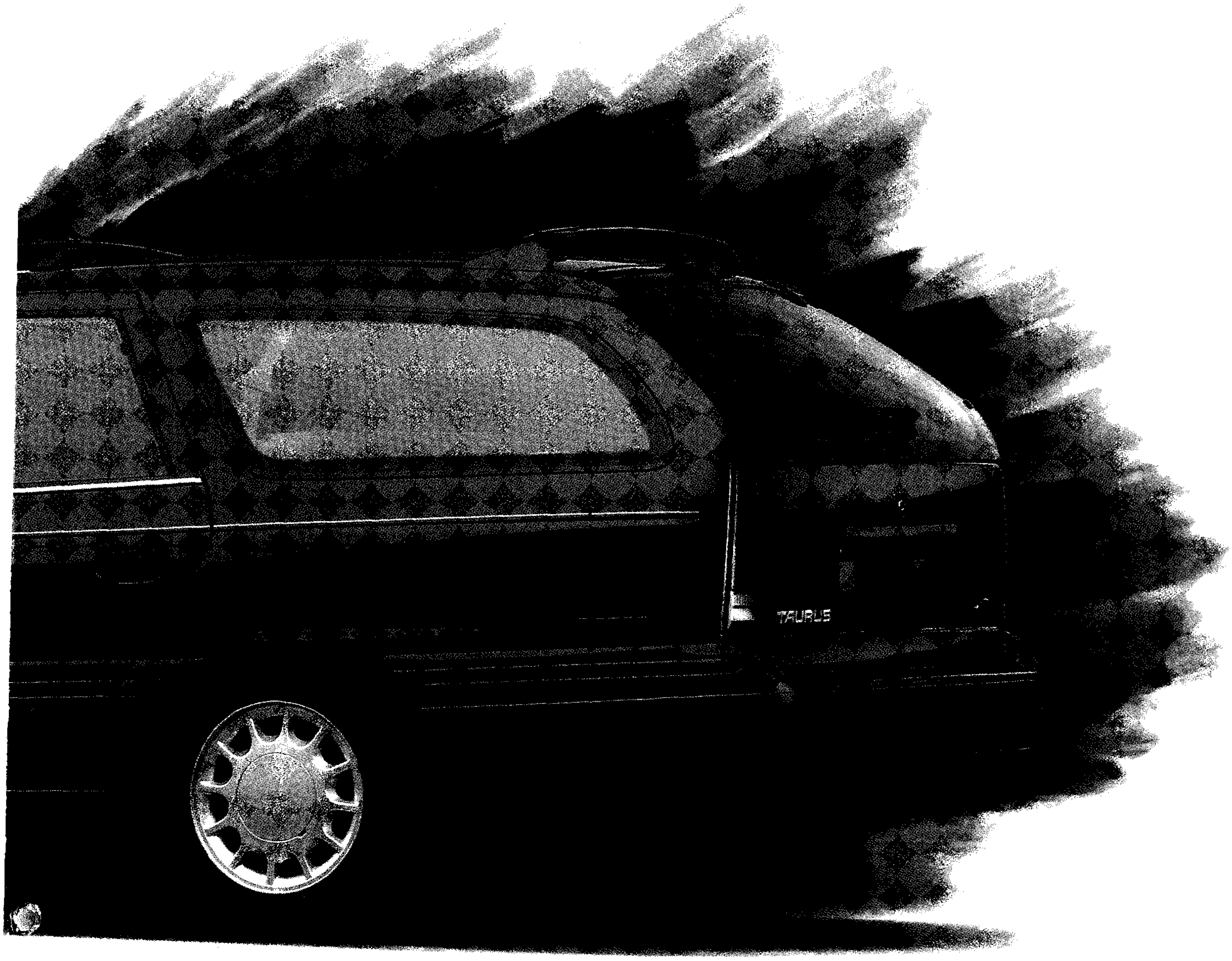

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

REMEMBERING SATAN—PART II

Is it possible for parents to inflict years of excruciating and bizarre abuse on their children and then repress all memory of it? The unprecedented case of Paul Ingram, charged with raping his daughters, became the focus of a raging debate over satanic-ritual abuse, sex-crimes investigation, and criminal accusations made on the basis of "recovered" memory.

BY LAWRENCE WRIGHT

IN the fall of 1988, Ericka and Julie Ingram, aged twenty-two and eighteen, accused their father, Paul R. Ingram, of sexual abuse. The Ingrams, who lived in East Olympia, Washington, were considered by many to be an exemplary family, and Ingram had been a well-respected deputy in the Thurston County Sheriff's Office for sixteen years. The charges quickly shattered that image, however, and the Ingram case has since come to symbolize a growing controversy in this country over the nature of memory—in particular, over the validity of "recovered" memories, especially memories of what has come to be called "satanic-ritual abuse." For after initially denying the charges, Ingram, at the urging of investigators and his pastor, began to produce memories not only of molesting his daughters but of subjecting them to horrifying abuse at the hands of a satanic cult. Ingram implicated in the crimes two of his friends, one of them a former colleague in the sheriff's department named Jim Rabie, and the other a mechanic named Ray Risch. Before long, Ericka and Julie—neither of whom had mentioned satanic-ritual abuse previously—confirmed and elaborated upon their father's gruesome memories. (Their brother Chad, meanwhile, said that he had been sexually abused by Rabie and Risch.) Ingram's wife, Sandy, who had at first insisted that her daughters' charges were false, later came to doubt the reliability of her own memory of family life. Virtually the entire police file on the case was eventually entered into the court record, and it was referred to for this article. (Paul Ingram, Julie, and Chad were interviewed. Sandy and Ericka declined to be interviewed; Paul Ross, the oldest son, could not be located.)

Although the revelations from Ingram and his daughters were frequently contradictory, investigators in the sheriff's department became convinced that they were dealing with the first criminal case capable of proving, finally, that satanic-ritual abuse existed.

"QUESTIONS TO ASK GOD," Sandy Ingram wrote on a scratch pad next to a grocery list in December, 1988. "Has my life been a lie—Have I hidden or suppressed things bad things that have happened in the past. . . . Have I been brainwashed, oppressed, depressed—controlled—without knowing it." What had once seemed to her a happy, normal life was no longer recognizable. Her husband and three of her five children were describing an existence she could hardly imagine. The police were still trying to find and interview Paul Ross, and how could she guess any longer what he might say? Her day-care license had been suspended. How was she going to support herself and the one child still at home, her nine-year-old son, Mark? "What I would like to do for a job," she wrote. "Chore work, go to school, pediatrick nurse, art teacher."

The Ingram family: Paul with (clockwise from right) Sandy, Julie, Chad, Paul Ross, and Ericka, in 1976. In 1989, Sandy wrote to her daughters, "I do not understand it all or remember it all yet. But I will and they are not above the law and you both do not have to fear any longer."

Two days after Paul's arrest, Sandy had gone to see him in jail. She sat facing a milky sheet of Plexiglas. Paul came into the room beyond, wearing orange coveralls and looking pale and thin. He picked up the phone on his side of the divider. She felt that they would never touch each other again. It was as if Paul were in some other, unreachable realm of reality. They talked in generalities about the case, awkwardly trying to keep the conversation alive. Paul reminded Sandy to get her driver's license renewed. Then he said that Pastor John Bratun, the assistant pastor of the family's church, had instructed him to make a confession that had nothing to do with his arrest: he told her about an affair he had had, which had been over for thirteen years. Sandy was devastated. If she hadn't known about the affair, she found herself thinking, then what else might she not have known about?

The house on Fir Tree Road

ON SATAN'S TRAIL

THE OFFICE OF
THURSTON
COUNTY
WASHINGTON
SHERIFF

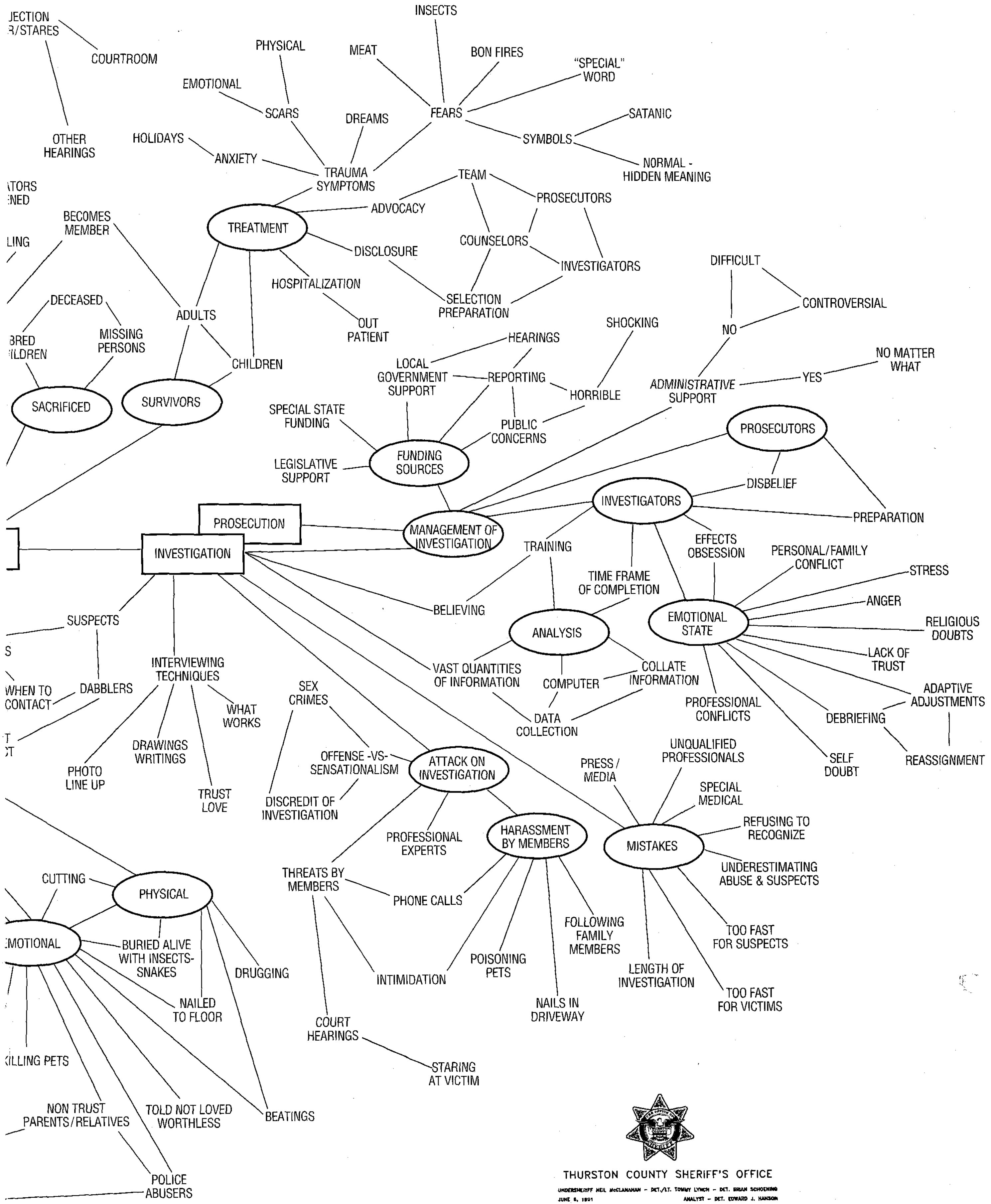
WHAT was going on in Thurston County? Was there really a satanic cult of child abusers run by several members of the county sheriff's office? If so, how had the cultists managed to hide from public exposure for nearly two decades? How did the cult maintain control over its victims, and what accounted for the mysterious gaps in the memories of both the alleged victims and the alleged perpetrators? These were the questions that Under-Sheriff Neil McClanahan, of the Thurston County Sheriff's Office, found himself confronting in the Ingram case.

In an effort to answer them, McClanahan began cataloguing data on satanic-ritual abuse which he had gathered in the course of his own research into the phenomenon. He included in his compilation presumed influences ("HEAVY METAL ROCK MUSIC"); victimization methods ("KILLING/EATING PETS"); and the challenges faced by law-enforcement officials ("VAST QUANTITIES OF INFORMATION"). He then commissioned a graphic representation of ritual abuse. "This chart really shows the magnitude of what we were facing," McClanahan says.

The chart, redrawn for legibility and reproduced here otherwise unchanged, provided a visual framework for the investigators' growing conviction that the Ingram case was part of a national and international satanic conspiracy. One can also see it as an illustration of exactly how confused the investigators became as they tried to explain the case to themselves. "It shows the links and how everything fits together. It isn't just a matter of people running around in robes and killing babies—it's much more complicated than that," McClanahan says. "When you look at the chart, don't you more or less go, like, 'Wow'?" ♦

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

)F RITUAL ABUSE



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VAST QUANTITIES
OF INFORMATION
COMPUTER
COLLATE
INFORMATION
DATA
COLLECTION

SUSPECTS
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WHEN TO
CONTACT
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INTERVIEWING
TECHNIQUES
WHAT
WORKS
PHOTO
LINE UP
DRAWINGS
WRITINGS
TRUST
LOVE
SEX
CRIMES
OFFENSE -VS-
SENSATIONALISM
ATTACK ON
INVESTIGATION
DISCREDIT OF
INVESTIGATION
PROFESSIONAL
EXPERTS
HARASSMENT
BY MEMBERS
THREATS BY
MEMBERS
PHONE CALLS
INTIMIDATION
POISONING
PETS
FOLLOWING
FAMILY
MEMBERS
NAILS IN
DRIVEWAY
COURT
HEARINGS
STARING
AT VICTIM

PRESS /
MEDIA
UNQUALIFIED
PROFESSIONALS
SPECIAL
MEDICAL
MISTAKES
REFUSING TO
RECOGNIZE
UNDERESTIMATING
ABUSE & SUSPECTS
TOO FAST
FOR SUSPECTS
LENGTH OF
INVESTIGATION
TOO FAST
FOR VICTIMS

CUTTING
PHYSICAL
MOTIONAL
BURIED ALIVE
WITH INSECTS-
SNAKES
DRUGGING
NAILED
TO FLOOR
KILLING PETS
NON TRUST
PARENTS/RELATIVES
TOLD NOT LOVED
WORTHLESS
BEATINGS
POLICE
ABUSERS

THURSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

UNDERSHERIFF NEIL McCLANAHAN – DET./LT. TOMMY LYNCH – DET. BRIAN SCHOENING
JUNE 6, 1991
ANALYST – DET. EDWARD J. HANSON

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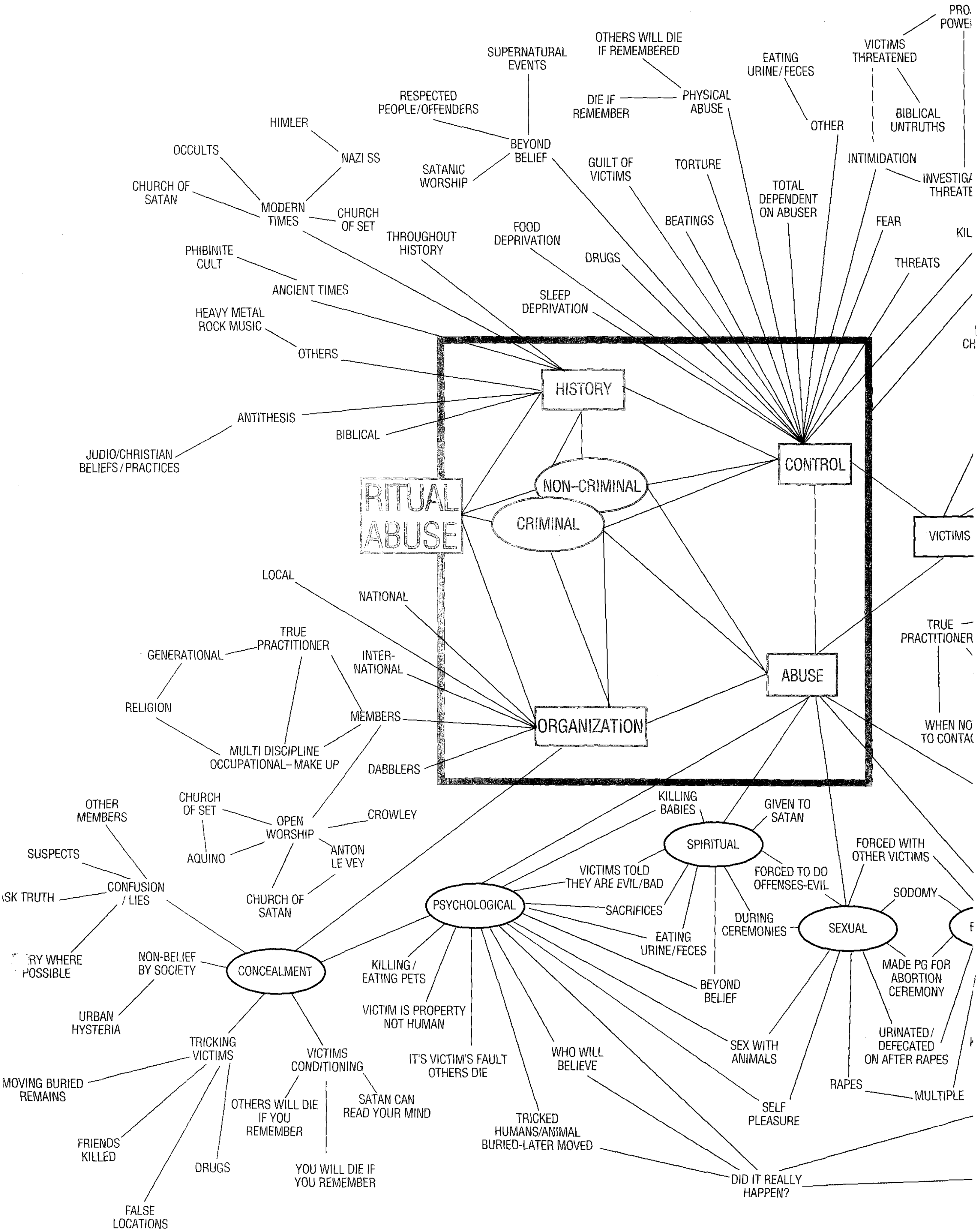
THURSTON COUNTY

THE FORMAL INVESTIGATION


PRO.
POWE
VICTIMS THREATENED
OTHERS WILL DIE IF REMEMBERED
SUPERNATURAL EVENTS
EATING URINE/FECES
PHYSICAL ABUSE
DIE IF REMEMBER
RESPECTED PEOPLE/OFFENDERS
OTHER
BIBLICAL UNTRUTHS
HIMLER
BEYOND BELIEF
NAZI SS
OCCULTS
GUILT OF VICTIMS
TORTURE
INTIMIDATION
SATANIC WORSHIP
INVESTIG
THREATE
TOTAL DEPENDENT ON ABUSER
CHURCH OF SATAN
MODERN TIMES
CHURCH OF SET
BEATINGS
FEAR
FOOD DEPRIVATION
THROUGHOUT HISTORY
KIL
PHIBINITE CULT
DRUGS
THREATS
ANCIENT TIMES
SLEEP DEPRIVATION
HEAVY METAL ROCK MUSIC
OTHERS
CH
HISTORY
ANTITHESIS
BIBLICAL
CONTROL
JUDIO/CHRISTIAN BELIEFS/PRACTICES
NON-CRIMINAL
RITUAL ABUSE
CRIMINAL
VICTIMS
LOCAL
NATIONAL
TRUE PRACTITIONER
TRUE PRACTITIONER
GENERATIONAL
INTER-NATIONAL
ABUSE
RELIGION
MEMBERS
WHEN NO
TO CONTAC
MULTI DISCIPLINE OCCUPATIONAL-MAKE UP
ORGANIZATION
DABBLERS
OTHER MEMBERS
CHURCH OF SET
KILLING BABIES
GIVEN TO SATAN
CROWLEY
OPEN WORSHIP
SUSPECTS
AQUINO
ANTON LE VEY
SPIRITUAL
FORCED WITH OTHER VICTIMS
VICTIMS TOLD THEY ARE EVIL/BAD
FORCED TO DO OFFENSES-EVIL
SK TRUTH
CONFUSION / LIES
CHURCH OF SATAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
SODOMY
SACRIFICES
DURING CEREMONIES
SEXUAL
EATING URINE/FECES
RY WHERE POSSIBLE
NON-BELIEF BY SOCIETY
CONCEALMENT
KILLING/EATING PETS
BEYOND BELIEF
MADE PG FOR ABORTION CEREMONY
URBAN HYSTERIA
VICTIM IS PROPERTY NOT HUMAN
URINATED/DEFECATED ON AFTER RAPES
TRICKING VICTIMS
VICTIMS CONDITIONING
IT'S VICTIM'S FAULT OTHERS DIE
WHO WILL BELIEVE
SEX WITH ANIMALS
MOVING BURIED REMAINS
RAPES
MULTIPLE
OTHERS WILL DIE IF YOU REMEMBER
SATAN CAN READ YOUR MIND
SELF PLEASURE
TRICKED HUMANS/ANIMAL BURIED-LATER MOVED
FRIENDS KILLED
DRUGS
YOU WILL DIE IF YOU REMEMBER
DID IT REALLY HAPPEN?
FALSE LOCATIONS

was so empty. During the day, Mark was in school, and, for the first time in her life, Sandy was alone. No day-care children, no husband coming home for lunch, no enormous loads of laundry to be done, no family dinners; there was so much silence and time. Sandy went to the mall and got her ears pierced.

That empty period was about to change, however. During the first couple of weeks in December, concerns arose on the part of the investigators about Sandy's role in the abuse. Both Ericka and Julie had initially denied that their mother was involved, but as the investigators and others repeatedly questioned how so many dreadful things could have been going on in the house without Sandy's knowledge, her daughters began making small disclosures.

They had described being abused by their father and his friends during poker games that were held at the Ingram house. Ericka now told a friend that sometimes when the men came into her room her mother would sit on the edge of the bed and watch.

"Your mother was a cheering section?" the friend asked.

"Well, she wouldn't do anything," Ericka explained. "She wouldn't say anything. She'd just watch."

"We're talking about your mother!" her friend, who was a mother herself and simply couldn't imagine such a scene, exclaimed.

"It was strange," Ericka agreed.

The friend reported the conversation to the police.

Detective Joe Vukich, of the Thurston County Sheriff's Office, interviewed another friend of Ericka's, who had heard a similar account. Sandy would come in before the men arrived and "get her ready," the woman told Vukich. "She said that her mother would be touching her vagina at times," the woman said.

"Did she say if that was strictly for the purpose of getting her ready or her mother was, in fact, sexually abusing her?"

"She used the words 'sexually abused.' "

"And how recent was that?" Vukich asked.

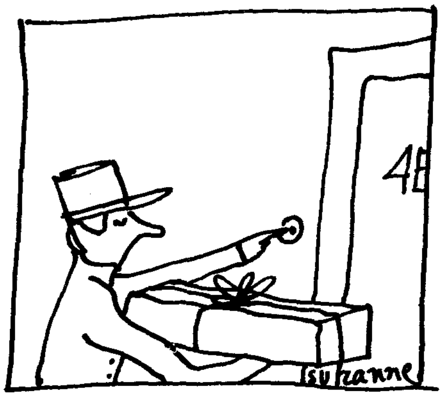
"She said it happened two times in the month of September," the woman answered.

The woman also related that Ericka had wondered whether her parents had given her drugs that affected her memory. "She said sometimes she had a hard time remembering what happened, and then all of a sudden it'd come back to her, but she didn't realize why she couldn't remember in the first place."

Vukich and Detective Loreli Thompson, of the nearby Lacey Police Department, had their next meeting with Ericka on December 8th. She was cheerful and talkative, according to Thompson's notes, until they asked again about her mother's role; then she became withdrawn, and communicated only with a few words or by shakes of the head. She recalled an evening, when she was nine or ten years old, on which her mother had entered her room, followed by her father, Rabie, and Risch. Rabie had stripped her and made her pose while he took photographs. Risch had held a gun. There had been many other photo sessions. Her mother had watched while this happened but had not participated.

Thompson left in the middle of the interview to meet with Ericka's younger sister. Julie had never mentioned anything about Sandy's being involved, nor had she spoken about photographs.

When Thompson asked Julie if her mother had ever been in the room when "bad things" happened to her, Julie said, "I don't think so." Thompson then asked when the last time had been that Rabie or Risch had photographed her. Julie slumped in her chair, drew her knees up to her chest, and wrote on a piece of paper, "Six years old." Where? "My bedroom," she wrote. Where was Ericka while this was happening? Julie shrugged. Where was her mother? No response. Then Julie wrote that Rabie and Risch had put their hands all over her body and told her she was special. Was anybody else in the room? Thompson asked again. Finally, Julie wrote, "My mom." She began to shake. Thompson asked if her mother had said anything to her. "She told me to be a good girl and that no one was hurting me." Then Julie began sobbing. Thompson ended the interview.



The next day, police investigators went to examine the Ingram house once again, hoping to find photographs of sexual abuse. Sandy was knitting at the dining-room table. Although the police search uncovered nothing incriminating, the officers informed Sandy of her rights and told her that they were investigating her involvement in photographing and sexually touching Ericka.

"Who are you most afraid of, Ray or Jim?" one of the detectives demanded when Sandy claimed to have no knowledge of what they were talking about.

"I'm not afraid of anybody," Sandy said, although at that moment she was close to panic. She called a lawyer, and the detectives left.

Everything in Sandy's life was flying to pieces. The marriage that she had once considered secure and happy had been exposed as a sham. Now her own daughters were accusing her of sexual abuse. Could such things have happened? Was there an unacknowledged "dark side" to Sandy, as there must have been to Paul?

What terrified Sandy most was the likelihood that she would lose Mark. Someone had called the state's Child Protective Services and said that Mark had to be taken from Sandy before the same things happened to him. The police knew that the anonymous caller was Ericka; she had been demanding custody of Mark. Sandy was afraid that unless she admitted that abuse had taken place in her home, she would be declared to be "in denial" and therefore an unfit parent. When Sandy spoke to Paul about her dilemma, in early December, he said that maybe it was a good idea to surrender Mark. At that moment, Sandy stopped defending her husband. "The house is very cold—and my heart is broken broken over + over," she wrote on a scrap of paper. "Things will not ever be the same."

On December 16th, Sandy went to see Pastor John Bratun, in his office at the Church of Living Water. Bratun is a kindly-looking man, with a long face and a mustache; he reminded Sandy of Tennessee Ernie Ford. From the night of Paul's arrest, when Bratun went with Pastor Ron Long to comfort Sandy at the house, and then visited Paul in his cell, Bratun had been intensely involved in the Ingram case. Often, he knew details well before the police did. Sandy would later say that she had always felt she could trust Pastor Bratun, and so she felt stung when he told her now that she was "eighty per cent evil." He reiterated a speech that she had heard from the detectives: either she had known what had been going on in her house and ignored it or else she had participated in it. She was probably going to go to jail unless she made a confession. Sandy bridled at the threat. "That may work with some people, but it won't work with me," she said. Still, she left Bratun's office feeling hurt and confused and even more afraid.

KEN'S
LAUNDR-O-RAMA
NO STARCH ON THIS ONE, EITHER, O.K.?
MY FIRST VISIT TO THE LAUNDROMAT
ZIEGLER

She was now almost completely alone; even her church had turned against her, and she could sense the relentless mechanism of the investigation bearing down upon her, ready to snatch her youngest child out of her hands and to grind away the small core of dignity that was left her in this sensational scandal. When she got home, she bundled Mark into the car and fled, forgetting to turn off the television in her haste. In a way, she felt, the escape was exhilarating. She had never driven even the short distance to Tacoma on her own, and now she was driving all the way across the state, through a snowstorm, to take refuge with relatives. She had never driven in snow before.

Sandy Ingram would later give her diary and correspondence to the police. "It is now Dec 17th—I am in Spokane," she wrote the day after fleeing from them. "Brought Mark here in case I get arrested. So much has happen I don't know If I can say it all—Jesus you know me better than I know myself—You know if all this is true. You know the truth—Please Jesus answer my hearts cry. Help me to get in touch with the truth with reality. I am afraid Jesus. I am afraid. Sometimes I am numb—sometimes I am excited about a new future. . . . Where have my children gone, my precious babies that I love—Forgive me Forgive me for not seeing—Oh Lord I do not understand. Help me to understand. Help! I took off my wedding ring Dec 16th in Ellenburg."

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ON December 18th, Detectives Brian Schoening and Joe Vukich, of the Thurston County Sheriff's Office, finally located Paul Ross, the eldest of the Ingram children, in Reno, Nevada, where he was working in a warehouse. They went by his apartment; he wasn't home. Schoening left a note on the door asking him to call them at the motel where they were staying. He called at eight-fifteen the next morning. There was a warrant outstanding for him in Thurston County for malicious mischief—he was accused of having battered someone's car with a baseball bat—and he wanted to know if that was why the officers had come. No, Schoening told him. There was a problem in his family, and his father and two other men, whom Schoening didn't name, were in jail. His sisters were in protective custody. The rest of his family was safe. Schoening didn't reveal what the charges were, but when Paul Ross met with the detectives several hours later he guessed that his father had been charged with a sexual offense.

There are no recordings of Schoening and Vukich's interview with Paul Ross, only notes made by Schoening. The detectives found Paul Ross to be hostile, bitter, and evasive. "I'd like to shoot my dad," he admitted. "I've always hated him." He said he wasn't surprised that his father was in jail, because his father had physically abused him. Specifically, the young man recalled an incident several years before in which his father had thrown an axe at him. Ingram had been standing on a deck behind the house, and Paul Ross and Chad, the middle son, had been in the back yard, below him. Angry because the blade was dulled, their father had thrown the axe from the deck, and if Paul Ross hadn't moved it would have struck him. What was significant about this memory was that, unlike so many others that the detectives had heard, two people—both the sons—had remembered it, and remembered it in the same way. The father's account was that he had only meant to toss the axe down to them and had been surprised when it landed right at the boys' feet. He had always felt bad about the incident, he said, and supposed that this was the reason his eldest child had left home.

As the one person in the family who

Helping Hand
LEVIN

had not been exposed to the church grapevine, and who claimed not to have heard about his father's arrest until that morning, Paul Ross was the least contaminated source the detectives had encountered. As they spoke to him, however, a now familiar fixated expression came over his face. He sat in the motel room, staring out at the foothills of the Sierra Nevadas, and his voice took on the monotonous quality of a trance-like state.

Vukich asked what he remembered about sexual abuse from his childhood. Nothing came to mind at first. He did recall the poker parties, and he mentioned the names of several of the players, including Rabie and Risch; then he picked out their photographs and those of others. He said that he hated Rabie. He called Risch "a gay guy." When the detectives asked him to explain, Paul Ross recalled an evening, when he was ten or eleven years old, on which he heard a muffled cry or a yelp. He crept downstairs to investigate. The door to his parents' bedroom was open just a crack. He saw his mother tied to the bed, with belts around her feet and what appeared to be stockings lashing her arms to the posts. "Jim Rabie was 'screwing' her," Schoening's report related, "and his dad had his 'dick' in her mouth." Ray Risch and another man were "to the left, 'jacking each other off.' His dad came over and hit him so hard it almost knocked him out, yelled at him to leave them alone, and closed the door." Paul Ross then got a fifth of whiskey and retreated to his room. He became an alcoholic that very night, he said.

The detectives found this story to be both confirmatory of their suspicions and maddeningly contradictory. The presence of Rabie and Risch as abusers in the Ingrams' house was crucial; on the other hand, Paul Ross could not remember any abuse at all connected with Ericka and Julie, nor could he recall being sexually abused himself. At one point, Schoening backed him up against the wall, and told him, "We know you're a victim." The young man demanded a break; he needed to be alone. He said he would be gone thirty minutes. He walked out and didn't come back.

The next day, December 20th, back in Olympia, Joe Vukich and Loreli Thompson met with Ericka and Paula Davis, a friend who was acting as Ericka's advocate, at the sheriff's office. Given the victim's state of mind, they thought it appropriate to conduct the session in a special room that had been set up—ironically, by Jim Rabie—for interviews with abused children. As they had done for nearly every interview concerning the case, the detectives turned on a tape recorder. Ericka and Paula sat in miniature chairs, amid the plastic toys and security blankets. Vukich asked Ericka if her brothers or her sister had ever discussed their abuse with her. "No." Ericka was monosyllabic. Vukich managed to get her to say that the last time Rabie had molested her was three months earlier, in September. After a while, she whispered that she needed to stop for a moment. The detectives left her in the room with Paula. When Vukich glanced in through a small window in the door, he saw the two women sitting on the floor. Ericka was cuddled up in Paula's lap, sobbing. His heart went out to her, he later said. He'd never seen a grown woman reduced to such a state.

"Do you remember what we asked you, Ericka, about what Mr. Rabie did when he came over to the bed?" Vukich said when the interview resumed.

Ericka sat mute, tugging at a thread on her jeans. A minute passed.

"And this was the last week of September," Thompson said to break the silence.

"What was it that he did, Ericka?" Vukich asked again. "Did he make you do something to him?"

"Yes." She hid her face in Paula's shoulder.

"Did he make you touch him somewhere? You're shaking your head. Is that yes or no?"

"Yes."

"What part of his body did you have to touch, Ericka?" Thompson asked.

"Can we stop for a minute? I have to go to the bathroom," Ericka suddenly announced, and she left the room. The detectives could hear her retching in the toilet. Davis went after her. The two women were gone for some time. When they came back, Ericka handed the detectives a sheet of paper on which she had written a detailed statement. Vukich read it aloud for the record:

> I was asleep in my room in bed and heard Jim Rabie come in and that's when I looked up and saw him. He started touching me with his hands first on the outside of my sweats, then underneath. He touched my chest and on my private parts, front and

> back. He inserted his fingers in my front and back private parts. . . . He forced my head to his front private part. . . . Then he stopped and said I knew what would happen if I told. Then he urinated all over my body in bed. He didn't defecate on me this time.

Vukich could barely control his emotions as he read; he felt overwhelmed by the monstrousness of the scene Ericka had just described. "I think I'd like to start at the end, where you say 'He didn't defecate on me this time,' " he said gently. "Were there other times when this same scenario happened where he did defecate on you?"

"Yes."

When Ericka left the interview room, Vukich took her handwritten statement down the hall and threw it on his lieutenant's desk. "The son of a bitch shit on her!" he cried. His voice was quaking. He had never felt this way about a victim before. His feelings were more those of a protective older brother, he later recalled, or the loving father she had apparently never had—even though he was not that much older than she. When the other detectives observed how emotional Vukich became in speaking about Ericka, however, they joked nervously that he was falling in love with her.

On December 20th, Sandy drove back to Olympia and went straight to Pastor Bratun's office. This time, Sandy later recalled, Bratun was more understanding. He explained to her that when he had said she was eighty per cent evil he was also saying there was a side to her that was twenty per cent good. This was the side that had brought her back. This was the side that was trying to remember. He revealed some of the new memories that Ingram was producing. Many of them concerned satanic scenes. One involved a former girlfriend of Ray Risch's, who Paul said was a high priestess of the cult. He had remembered having sex with her after a ritual in a barn. He had signed an oath in blood, pledging loyalty to the cult. Sandy said she couldn't remember any such scenes. Paul had also recalled Sandy having sex with Risch, Bratun told her. He asked if that had ever happened. Sandy said no, then hesitated for a moment. "Oh, no!" she cried, and fell forward, burying her head between her knees.

The first memory Sandy produced resembled the scene her eldest son had described. She was not tied to the bed, however, and it was Risch having sex with her, not Rabie. Paul stood to one side, guarding the door. Then another memory surfaced. This time, she was tied up, but she was on the living-room floor. Rabie was there, naked, and, for some reason, he was on all fours, howling like a dog. She then saw herself in the closet with Paul, and he had hold of her hair and was hitting her with a stick of kindling. The others were in the living room, laughing at her. Paul pulled her out of the closet, and Rabie and Risch had anal intercourse with her. It seemed to Sandy that these incidents must have happened before 1978. After leaving Bratun's office, Sandy returned to Spokane to spend Christmas with Mark.

Paul Ingram was transferred to a jail in another county. Once he was away from the daily interrogations and the constant urgings of Bratun, his confusion about how to integrate his memories intensified. A Christian counsellor hired by Ingram's attorney administered a standard sexual-deviation test. Ingram insisted on taking it three times—once giving answers based on his state of mind before his arrest, once for the time before Pastor Bratun came and delivered him of demon spirits, and once for his current state. The first exam showed him to have no sexual deviations; however, on the basis of Ingram's responses in the two other exams, the counsellor found him to have significant sexual problems.

Rabie and Risch were both in solitary confinement. Rabie, who is a narcoleptic, refused to take his medication and spent much of his time sleeping; it was the only time he was ever grateful for his affliction. During his waking moments he pored obsessively over the police re-

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POLITE NODS FROM THE HOST

as one of the guests starts in
on the carcinogens in cola, the criminal
fluoridation of the water—our children
will die riddled with cancer, he says,
but with perfect teeth—
and the murmur of dinner-party assent
rises in the salutary air.
He plunges on, waiving the lethal prosciutto,
enlisting us in a write-in campaign
to Public Works, but it's all rote
by now and he is elsewhere, restoring
his hundred-year-old house
with nontoxic solvents and benign glaze.
His parquetry bubbles and cracks
around his kitchen-brewed glue (no
horse hooves or animal gelatins, he's
an Alternative Chemist), and his wife
glides unerringly over the humps and divots
of his pure distinctions. She doesn't weary
of him, she's interested in his capacity
for vision and rage, how the minutiae
of everyday life are kindling, and consciousness
itself is composed of combinant molecules
whose equations are there for anyone, everyone,
to see. Not a Cassandra, she thinks,
he's more like Pygmalion, taking the resistant ivory
of human obtuseness and carving a mask
from it, falling in love with it,
with all that's worth saving, even
at parties like these, where the talk
turns general and the leave-takings begin.

—LYNNE MCMAHON

ports of his case. Risch lost forty pounds in solitary, and his hair, which had been jet black, turned completely white. His wife worried that he might have suffered a stroke, because he couldn't keep track of his thoughts; he had difficulty hearing; suddenly, he seemed unable to complete a sentence.

On the day after Christmas, Sandy returned, again alone, to the house on Fir Tree Road. "Dear Paul," she wrote that day. "I am praying for you that you can be totally and wholly restored. . . . Sometimes I am very afraid. Afraid because of what has happened in the past. . . . Sometimes I am even afraid of you Paul mostly because I do not know the truth. Was I controlled by you." Apparently contradicting what she told Pastor Bratun, she continued, "I am not remembering anything, but with God's help I will remember. I was very tired after driving today. I was also very upset—and didn't want to come back here. I didn't want to leave Mark." Then she began to draw upon other memories, which she and Paul had shared. "Do you remember Paul Ross he was such a good baby so smart—do remember Ericka so beautiful, so tiny a diaper just wouldn't fit. And Andrea—How they would cry every night and I would sit + cry + hold them and as soon as you come home + took one of them they would quit crying—+ Chad . . . he was a delight a quite delight always telling funny things He was hard to correcct because everything he said would make you laugh—" Here the handwriting became skewed, and it spilled over the ruled lines of the stationery. "Paul, Do you remember how we meet—How shy you where? Do you rember that first drive in movie I remember but not the movie Do you rembere even before we married how we said or you said if we were unfaithful that was it Do you Remember—all the Ice Cream—when I was pregnant with Paul Ross—" The last line ran off the bottom of the page.

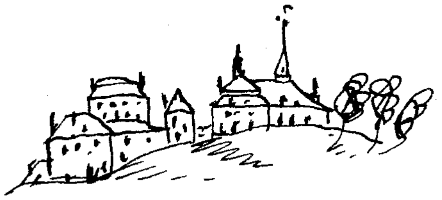
On December 30th, Ericka and Paula Davis returned for another interview session with Joe Vukich. Ericka wrote out another statement:

> From the time I was about 5 yrs. old until the time I was about 12 yrs. old . . . I remember being carried from my bed, by my father in the middle of the night. There were many people there waiting outside by the barn some of them were Jim Rabie, Ray Risch, Mom, Dad, High Priestess in a robe the people wore white, red + black. There were many men there + some women. They chanted as I was carried out. It was cold out middle of the night and all I wore was a nightgown. My mother walked with us to the barn from the time I was taken from my bed until the time I we were in the barn. The was a table inside the barn. There was also a fire. All the people around the table including my mom + dad wore a gown + a hat resembling a viking hat with horns. There was a lot of blood everywhere. There was pitchforks in the ground. . . . With the sacrifice they would lay it first on the table then the high priestess would pick it up all the people would chant + the women would say words then the baby would be put on the table + all of the people including my mother + father circling the table would stab it with knives until it died. They continued to do this for a long time sometimes even after it was dead. Then they would all walk to the pit and chant and the high priestess would carry the baby and put the baby in something white then put it in the ground. Then they would bury it. The baby was a human baby about 6-8 months old. Sometimes they would use aborted babies. They would tell me this is what would happen to me also. They also would say you will not remember this. They would say it over + over again like a chant.

It was the first time that anyone in the Ingram family other than Paul had mentioned satanic rituals. His accounts hadn't included any mention of human sacrifice. Ericka then drew a map of the family's former house and another of the new house, on Fir Tree Road, indicating where the ceremonies had been held and where the babies were buried.

A week later, Detective Loreli Thompson met with Julie. Julie looked exhausted; she said she had not slept well in days. Thompson asked whether she and Ericka had been in communication about the case. "She called me and told me about satanic stuff," Julie acknowledged. Did she remember anything like that? "I remember burying animals," she said. "Goats, cows, and chickens." Were these natural deaths? Julie didn't know. Did she ever go to parties where people were wearing costumes? Julie became thoughtful. "No," she finally answered. Any ceremonies besides church? "No."

"I then asked if there were marks or cuts on her body from the abuse," Thompson wrote in her report. "She shook her head yes, radically. She showed me her forearms. I noted two light cuts on the right arm and two round marks on the left arm. These were small round marks similar to a burn mark. . . . I inquired about cuts on her upper arms, back and legs. She wrote down, 'Yes,' that there were injuries there. I asked how these wounds were inflicted. She wrote down, 'With knives.' . . . I asked who did this to her. She wrote down, 'Jim Rabie and my dad.' " Julie then put her head on the table and began to cry. Thompson asked if she might let her see the scars, but Julie adamantly refused.



The sisters' inability to talk about their abuse was becoming a problem as the trial date of Rabie and Risch approached. Gary Tabor, the chief prosecutor, met with Julie in Detective Thompson's presence. Tabor, a conservative, deeply religious Oklahoma man who still speaks in the flat, nasal tones of his native state, has a heavy-lidded gaze, a gap-toothed smile, and a reputation as the smartest prosecutor in the county. He was confounded by all the rabbit holes in the Ingram case, however. This recent note of satanic-ritual abuse was more than troubling from the prosecution's point of view, because juries tend to disbelieve such allegations. Tabor longed to keep the case simple, but it went on metastasizing and invading new territory. He could easily imagine what a clever defense attorney might do with the mass of contradictory memories that constituted the case against Rabie and Risch so far. Moreover, the victims appeared to be so traumatized that it was an open question whether they could testify in court. Tabor was trying to size up Julie as a witness. What he saw was not encouraging. She could not make eye contact. She pulled chewing gum out of her mouth in long strands. Tabor asked her if she was having trouble remembering the abuse. According to Thompson's reports, she replied that she just remembered things as she went along. She began tearing at the rubber sole of her shoe. Tabor asked her how her mother had acted when she came into the room before the men arrived to abuse her. Julie didn't answer. Tabor and Thompson watched as Julie peeled the sole off her shoe.

In a letter dated January 18, 1989, Sandy wrote:

> Dear Ericka and Julie,
>
> Mark is doing fine. . . . I call him everynight. Also I do have the house + 4 acres on the market to sale for 79,500. I still owe the

> bank about 48,000. Also have the other 6 acres for sale. . . . As soon as anything sales, I will be putting money into your savings accounts. I am hoping I can give each of you—Chad + Mark + Paul Ross also—enough money so that you can relocate, or go to college or do whatever you desire. . . .
>
> I am also planning to go to college and to relocate. Also I will be taking back my maiden name + start again.
>
> I am not talking with Paul bacause as I remember what has happened to me I am very much afriad. . . .
>
> Again I ask for your forgiveness. I trully did not know what was happening and I am just begining to remember what did happen to me + I have remember something that have happened to you both. I do not understand it all or remember it all yet. But I will and they are not above the law and you both do not have to fear any longer. . . .
>
> Love Mom

The day after Sandy wrote to her daughters, Detective Thompson drove Julie to Seattle. Both sisters had spoken of having had abortions, in addition to severe scarring from other abuse. The attorneys for Rabie and Risch had been pressuring the court to have them submit to a physical examination to verify that the abortions and scarring were authentic. Julie had finally agreed to see a female doctor who specialized in treating abuse victims.

Earlier, Julie had told Thompson that the scars on her body made her so self-conscious that she never changed clothes in the high-school locker room and never wore a bathing suit without a T-shirt to cover her. When Julie emerged, the doctor told Thompson that there was no lingering physical evidence of an abortion, but that its absence wasn't conclusive; often there would be no residual scarring, particularly in a young woman. Repeated vaginal or anal abuse would not necessarily leave a mark, either. The epidermis, however, would tend to reveal physical abuse, and the doctor had found no marks or scars anywhere on Julie's body.

Julie was unusually chatty on the ride back to Olympia. This time, it was Thompson who was quiet. There should have been scars, she kept thinking. Julie had said there were scars.

Later, the same doctor examined Ericka, and except for mild acne her only scar was from an appendectomy.

"I'll stick with the rubber pork chop."

• •

"Would it be possible for someone to be cut superficially and for that to heal without making a scar?" Thompson asked.

"I would think any significant cut would probably leave a scar," the doctor said.

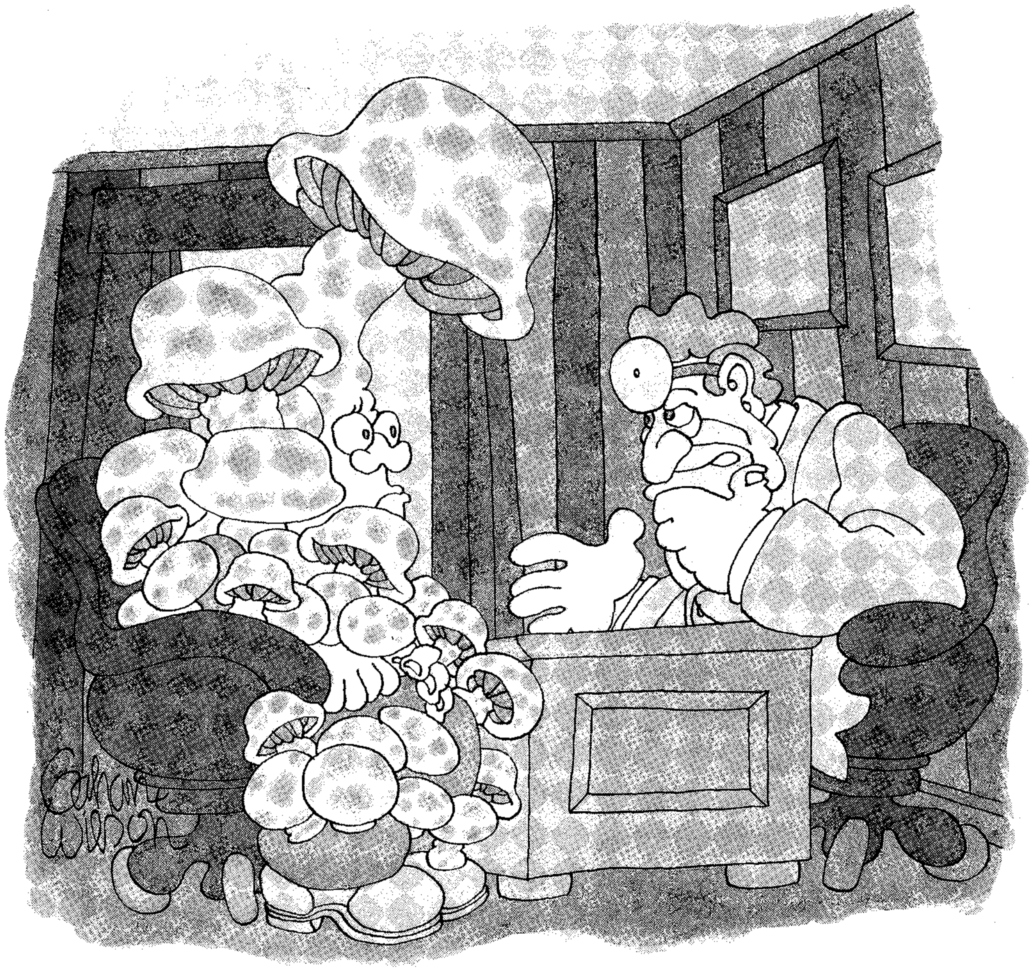
When Thompson asked whether there was any evidence of Ericka's having had an abortion, the doctor told her that Ericka had denied having ever been pregnant; in fact, she had claimed that she had never been sexually active.

Vukich saw Ericka again on January 23rd. Ericka had new disclosures to make, and once again they were so painful that she had to make them in writing. She described being abused by her mother, her father, Rabie, and Risch with leather belts and various sexual devices while someone took photographs. Vukich tried again to ask about the abortion, but Ericka wouldn't respond. Then Paula Davis wrote this statement for her:

> My father made me perform sexual acts with animals including goats + dogs. . . . He would bring the animals to me + have them perform oral licking to my genitals. Sometimes I was on my period, sometimes not on my period. Then my father would force me to have vaginal intercourse with the animals, While he took photographs. My mother was also present + also had intercourse with the animals.

These events had taken place from the time Ericka was in kindergarten until she was in high school. While Davis took down the statement, Ericka doodled on another sheet of paper—little flowers and what appeared to be a frowning butterfly.

The trial date for Jim Rabie and Ray Risch had been set for February, just a couple of weeks away. Although they had made statements that the in-



"Have you considered installing a dehumidifier?"

vestigators found equivocal, both men maintained their innocence. Tabor, the prosecutor, continued to have serious doubts about whether Ericka and Julie could testify. Recently Sandy had come forward to make statements implicating the defendants, but these had concerned her, not her daughters. Paul Ross was very reluctant to testify, and even if he did his testimony might do more harm than good to the prosecution's case, since he was unable to verify the abuse to his sisters. What was still more troubling, Chad, who had earlier given a statement about having been sexually abused by Rabie and Risch, had now begun to recant. He was declaring, as he had when he first met with the investigators, that the scenario he had spoken about had been a bad dream.

That left Paul Ingram as the sole reliable witness in the case. He had pleaded not guilty in his first court hearing, in December, but Tabor saw that as a routine pleading. Ingram had always indicated his willingness to testify. Such testimony almost invariably comes about in exchange for a plea bargain; in fact, the prosecution had put together a deal in which Ingram would plead guilty to nine counts of third-degree rape, with the sentences to run concurrently. In return, the prison time would be minimal, and there was even a chance that Ingram could walk out of the courtroom a free man once he had testified against his friends.

Ingram confounded everyone: he agreed to testify without making any deals. G. Saxon Rodgers, who was Jim Rabie's attorney, was incredulous—and dismayed. The situation was a prosecutor's ideal, since a jury will usually discount testimony that has resulted from a plea bargain. Rodgers' theory about the case was that Ingram really had abused his daughters, and had implicated Rabie and Risch, two innocent men, knowing that he had thereby created a conspiracy case in which he would be the key state witness. All this would fit in with the portrait of the cunning, politically sophisticated former deputy sheriff which Rodgers had intended to paint in court. In this rendering, Ingram had controlled the case from the beginning. But when Ingram agreed to testify for nothing he took the brush right out of Rodgers' hand.

On January 30th, Sax Rodgers and Richard Cordes, who represented Ray Risch, were permitted to meet with one of the prosecution witnesses. It was Julie. The meeting took place at the Lacey Police Department. Julie still looked exhausted. She cuddled a stuffed bear that Detective Thompson had given her, and often didn't respond to questions from the attorneys. At one point, she crawled under a desk and hid there for ten minutes. When the questioning resumed, Rodgers took a more indirect tack. He asked Julie about Ericka's twin, Andrea, who had been institutionalized as an infant after suffering brain damage as a result of meningitis. Julie remembered visiting her in Spokane. Andrea and Ericka were not identical, but they looked very much alike, except for Andrea's swollen head and cramped limbs. Andrea had died in 1984, just before her eighteenth birthday. Ericka had taken the news very hard; she shut herself up in her room for a month. "A part of me has died," Julie said Ericka had told her.

When the attorneys tried to resume talking about the case, Julie retreated to one-word replies. She spun the stuffed bear in the air. Finally, Cordes asked if she would just tell him what his client had done to her. She shrugged.

"Will you ever?" he asked.

"Maybe I will," she responded.

That was the end of the interview. It had taken three and a half hours, and she had said virtually nothing.

A week later, Rodgers and Cordes met with Ericka and the investigators at the sheriff's office. Ericka was far more talkative. She described severe sexual and physical abuse, but told them that she had no permanent scars or marks. Ericka said that she hadn't known about Julie's abuse or her pregnancy until learning of it from the detectives. Rodgers asked about Rabie's involvement, and Ericka told them that he had sexually assaulted her eight times in September alone, and many more times before that—perhaps fifty or a hundred, going back to when she was thirteen. The last time she was assaulted, her father began it, then it was Rabie, then her mother; afterward, each of them defecated on her. As for Risch, she couldn't remember him doing anything sexual to her—except for taking photographs.

To the defense attorneys' increasing amazement, Ericka then described orgies in the woods, in which babies were sacrificed and buried behind the Ingram house. Rabie and Risch were there, she said. Once, when she was a sophomore in high school, they held her down and tied her to a table. She was pregnant, she said, and someone aborted her baby with a coat hanger. That was very painful. Then the baby was cut up and rubbed all over her body. She had seen approximately twenty-five babies sacrificed over the years.

The defense attorneys could sense panic on the opposing side. The satanic-abuse accusations hadn't hit the press yet, but it was easy to imagine the public outcry when they did, and the pressure that the prosecution would be under to produce convictions. Perhaps all this could be avoided. Perhaps Tabor would like to just drop the charges against Rabie and Risch if Ingram would quietly plead guilty and get treatment.

Before Tabor would agree to a deal, however, he would have to be persuaded that Rabie and Risch were really innocent men caught up in some kind of familial hysteria. Rabie was still asking for a polygraph test. Rabie knew that polygraphs were not infallible, and also that the test results could not be admitted in court. But he also knew Tabor and the investigators. If Rabie had been in their place, he would have had to think very hard about continuing a prosecution against a man who had willingly taken a polygraph test and passed it.

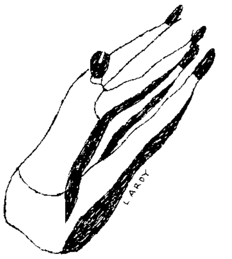
Early on the morning of February 3rd, Rabie was taken from his cell in chains and loaded into a police car. The test was administered in the Olympia Police Department by an officer whom Rabie knew, and it lasted into the afternoon. As is usual with a polygraph, the actual test was preceded by a lengthy period of discussion—in this instance, about Rabie's growing up, his marriages, his sexual fantasies. The investigators could watch the test and monitor Rabie's responses on a video screen in another room. Rabie said later that he had been feeling very anxious but confident. The four critical questions that the examiner asked him were:

1. Regarding sexual contact with any of the Ingram children, do you intend to answer truthfully?
2. Did you ever have any sexual contact with Julie?
3. Did you ever have any sexual contact with Ericka?
4. Did you ever threaten any of the Ingram children?

Rabie loudly answered yes to the first question and no to the others. The examiner asked them again, to be sure of his responses. In each instance, the graph showed that Rabie lied.

On the morning of February 2nd, Detective Schoening was waiting at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport to pick up Dr. Richard Ofshe, a social psychologist from the University of California at Berkeley who had been recommended to the prosecution as an expert on cults and mind-control. Ofshe certainly looks the part of the distinguished college professor: he has owlish dark eyes and a luxuriant gray-white beard, which lends him an air of Zeus-like authority. His credentials include a Pulitzer Prize, which he shared, in 1979, for research and reporting on the Synanon cult in Southern California. When Tabor had called and asked Ofshe if he had any experience with satanic cults, Ofshe told him that no one could claim to be an expert, because so far the allegations were largely unproved. This is real, Tabor had assured him. Then I'm interested, Ofshe had replied.

As they drove to Olympia, Schoening briefed Ofshe on the case. Practically nothing that anyone was saying could be verified. All the stories were at war with each other. People aren't even talking normally, Schoening complained. Ofshe asked what he meant, and Schoening described Ingram's third-person confessions and the "would've"s and "must have"s that characterized his language.



The problem everyone had was Paul's continuing inability to remember clearly. That struck a familiar chord with Ofshe. In addition to his work with cults, he had interested himself in coercive police interrogations. At that moment, a paper he had written, concerning innocent people who became convinced of their guilt and confessed, was about to be published in the *Cultic Studies Journal.* In each case that Ofshe had studied, the confession had come about when the police succeeded in convincing the suspect that the evidence against him was overwhelming and that if he couldn't remember committing the crime there was a valid reason for his lack of memory, such as his having blacked out or fallen into some kind of fugue state.

In the Ingram case, Ofshe was told, the reason the suspect couldn't remember raping his children repeatedly over seventeen years was that he had repressed the memories as soon as the abuse occurred. Even the prosecution was uncomfortable with that theory, and the idea of mind-control had arisen as an alternative to it. Perhaps the cult had interfered with the ordinary process of memory formation, either through drugs or through chronic abuse. Perhaps the reputedly brilliant Dr. Ofshe could unlock the programming that had scrambled the memory circuitry of nearly everyone in the Ingram family.

Ofshe's first interview was with Paul Ingram, in the presence of Schoening and Vukich. He was impressed by Ingram's eagerness to help and his longing to understand his own confused state of mind. As Ofshe tried to get Ingram to lead him through the case, however, he decided that there was clearly something wrong. It wasn't possible for the human memory to operate in the fashion that Ingram was describing. Either he was lying or he was deluded. When Ofshe asked him to describe more routine episodes in his life, Ingram demonstrated perfectly ordinary recall. Then where were these other memories coming from? Ingram described the manner in which he would get an image and then pray on it. He told Ofshe he had been practicing a relaxation technique that he had read about in a magazine, in which he would imagine going into a warm white fog. Minutes would pass and then more images would come, he said, and he felt confident that they were real memories, because Pastor Bratun had assured him that God would bring him only the truth. After a while, he would write his memories down. Ofshe wondered if Ingram was possibly taking a daydream and recording it as a memory. He made a spontaneous decision to run what he later referred to as a "little experiment" to determine whether Ingram was lying or believed that what he was relating was genuine.

According to Ofshe, he turned to Ingram and said, "I was talking to one of your sons and one of your daughters, and they told me about something that happened." Schoening and Vukich looked at Ofshe in dumbfounded surprise, since he had not yet met any other members of the Ingram family. "It was about a time when you made them have sex with each other while you watched," Ofshe said. "Do you remember that?"

No, Ingram didn't remember that. But Ofshe was not deterred. "This really did happen," he told Ingram. "Your children were there—they both remember it. Why can't you?"

Where did it happen? Ingram wanted to know.

It happened in the new house, Schoening said, playing along.

Ingram closed his eyes and put his head in his hands. Two minutes passed in silence.

"I can kind of see Ericka and Paul Ross," Ingram said.

Ofshe told him not to say any more. Go back to your cell and pray on it, he said.

Ingram left the interview room. What was Ofshe up to? the detectives demanded. He explained that he was simply testing the validity of Ingram's memories. In that case, why couldn't he have picked something a little further outside the realm of possibility, they asked. None of the investigators would have been surprised if Ingram *had* orchestrated sex among his children.

Later that afternoon, Ofshe met Julie at the sheriff's office, in the company of Detective Thompson, Gary Tabor, and Julie's advocate from a local rape-crisis center.

Ofshe thought he detected a certain playfulness in Julie. He hoped he could use it to draw her out. For the first time, Julie produced cult memories of her own. She wrote a brief description of people in robes and a doll hanging from a tree. Ofshe asked if the members of the cult had told her they had magic powers. "No, they didn't," Julie said. Did anyone ever tell her that the cult knew what she was doing all the time? There was no answer. Was that a question she didn't want to answer? Julie had turned her chair to the wall; the back of her head nodded. "That means it's true, then," Ofshe said. He asked Julie to write down how they were able to spy on her. Julie wrote, "They said that a high and mighty man spoke to them and would tell them ever thing I said, or did. The high & might man spoke to them threw other people." Was that high and mighty man the Devil? Julie shrugged. She talked of having gone to church frequently when she was a child and having liked it "some." She believed in Satan but did not know why. She described herself as being a weird and nervous person. Ofshe asked her to write the names of any other children in the cult. She wrote down "Ericka, Chad, Paul" and the names of three other children—names that had not previously come up. Then she listed the adults, again mentioning new names. For the first time, the membership of the cult was taking shape. As far as the investigators were concerned, it was a highly productive interview.

The contrast between the sisters impressed Ofshe strongly when, the next day, he met Ericka. Julie was such a casual dresser—to the point, really, of being careless—whereas Ericka was heavily made-up and wore her hair teased into a dramatic coif. Instead of shrinking from the spotlight, Ericka seemed eager to claim center stage. The sisters scarcely seemed related at all, except as opposites: Julie so shy, Ericka so bold; Julie so plain, Ericka so attractive.

Ofshe approached his interview with Ericka as if he were an anthropologist who had just dropped into her town and was interested in learning about her life in the cult. Tell me what the meetings were like, how they fitted into your ordinary life, he said. By her own estimate, Ericka had attended eight hundred and fifty rituals during her life and watched twenty-five babies sacrificed. What, exactly, went on during the rituals? Ofshe wanted to know. "They chant," Ericka said. Did you sit or stand? he asked her. She couldn't remember. Who were the other people, and what were they like? It was too stressful to talk about. Before concluding the interview, Ofshe asked if her father had ever forced her and one of her brothers to have sex while he watched. Ericka said that nothing like that had ever happened.

That day Ofshe visited Ingram again, in jail. Ingram said he had got some clear memories of Ericka and Paul Ross having sex. He had made some notes. Once again, Ofshe asked him to say no more, just go back to his cell and pray and visualize and write it down for him.

Ofshe also met with Sandy. She told him that she was beginning to retrieve more memories now, through the counselling of Pastor Bratun.

"How does Pastor Bratun help?" Ofshe asked.

"He kind of prods," Sandy said. "When we start, initially he did describe a scene to me."

"One that Paul has given him?" asked Ofshe.

Sandy agreed that most of her memory sessions began this way.

Ofshe wanted to know if Sandy was afraid of her husband.

"No," she said. "I remember him hollering at me sometimes, in my normal memory, but it was never anything that seemed out of line. I remember him hitting me one time, in my normal memory, but I don't remember anything that would have given me a clue that something was wrong."

"Where did you get this idea of a normal memory and some other kind of memory?" Ofshe asked.

"There are the things I remember, like birthday parties and how old the kids were in this particular year," Sandy said. "Then, there are the things that I've remembered since then. It is different from what my other memories are."

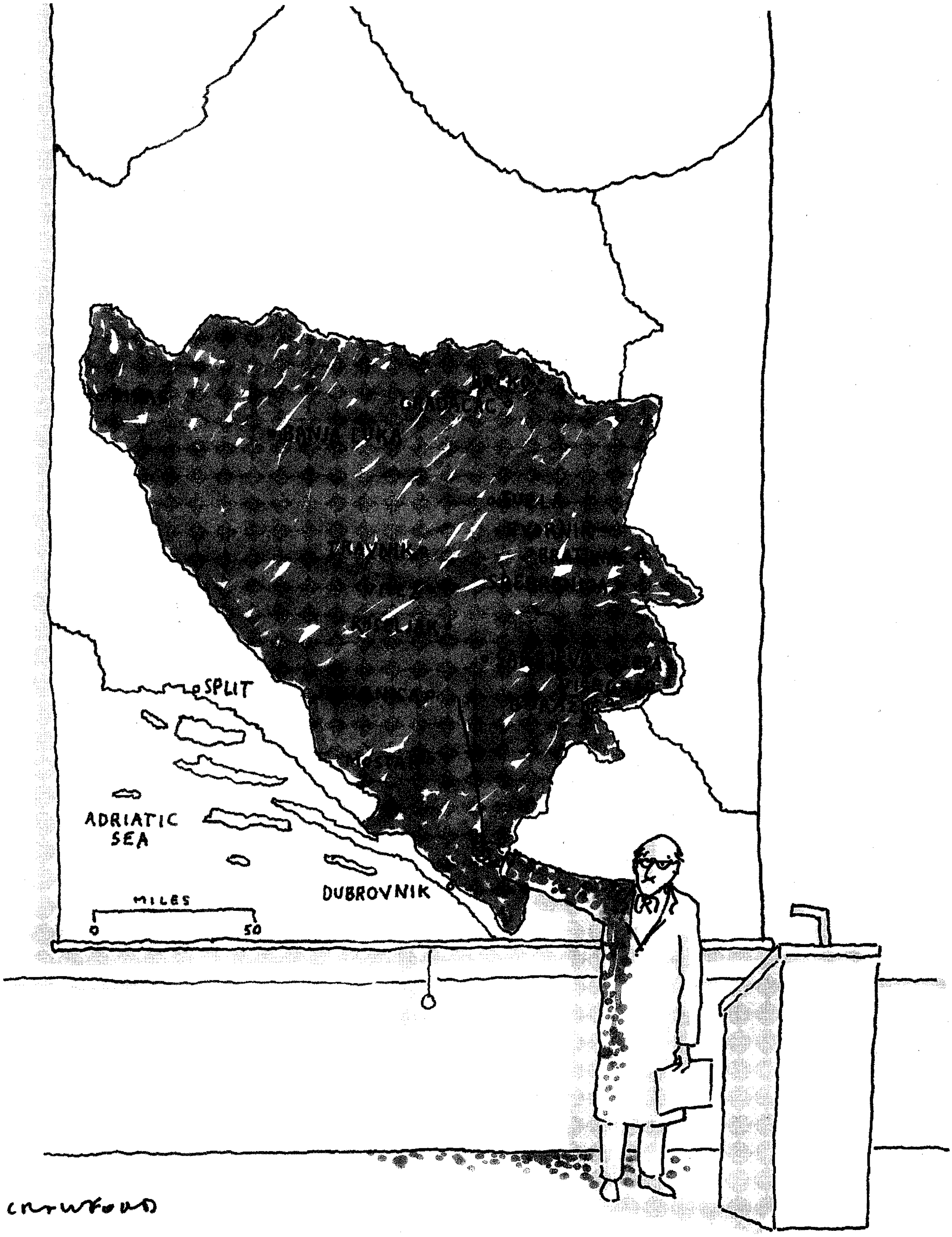
Ofshe asked her to describe the memories she was getting with the help of Pastor Bratun. Sandy detailed several rape scenes with Rabie and Risch, and satanic rituals in the woods. "I remember being tied to a tree," she said. "There was water and fire. One time, Jim took the kids by their heels and dumped them in the water. And they wanted me to put on a white robe. . . . Ray's standing out here and he's holding all the robes, and when I first saw the scene it felt like an initiation."

"Do you 'see' the scene or do you remember it?"

"No, I see it," Sandy said. "And, uh, everybody says this pledge of allegiance and we're all outside, and there's this book on the table and, uh, Jim is holding my shoulder and his nails are all painted

ARTIST'S NOTEBOOK BY MICHAEL CRAWFORD

THE ANATOMY LESSON


SPLIT
ADRIATIC SEA
DUBROVNIK
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black and they're real long and they go into my shoulder and this book is *bleeding*"—her voice broke, and she began to sob—"and Paul and [the high priestess] and Jim touch it, and the blood runs all over Jim and up his arm and all over his head and then it runs all over me!"

"The blood runs uphill?"

Sandy laughed despairingly. "Jim says I am ready, and they put me on the table and there's like a leather strap around my neck and my arms and my legs and my ankles and then [the high priestess] cuts my clothes off with the knife!"

By now, Sandy was shaking. Everyone who had seen her when she was caught up in this state had been alarmed by her bobbing head, her rolling eyes, and her high, quaking voice. Her face became bizarrely contorted. When Sax Rodgers deposed her, it had been one of the most shocking experiences of his life. Even Detective Thompson had been unnerved by the eerie spectacle that Sandy presented.

Ofshe now pulled her back by getting her to describe ordinary memories, such as family vacations. She immediately calmed down. She talked about trips to Deer Lake in eastern Washington, and picking up Andrea beforehand, and other times, when the kids were small and they would all go camping and take long walks together. "There was a little store there, and paddleboats, and the kids could fish off the dock and swim."

"Do you remember those things?" Ofshe asked.

"Yes."

". . . Can you remember them without 'seeing' them?"

"Yes."

"Can you remember the other kinds of scenes without 'seeing' them?"

"I don't know. I just see 'em, that's all," Sandy said. "I can feel them touching me and holding me. I can smell things."

"So it's real for you."

Sandy agreed that it was very real.

"Would it surprise you if I told you that I think nothing happened?" Ofshe asked.

"Well, we've talked about that," Sandy said. "I've even thought about that myself—you know, that this was all a big lie and a hoax."

"Those aren't the words I would use," Ofshe said gently. "If I told you I thought this had all come about by mistake, would that surprise you?"

"Well," Sandy said, "everything that's happened has been very surprising and very strange, but I'd wonder why I was feeling them touching me, holding me, and I could smell them, feel them, and hear them."

"Do you have bad dreams like this?"

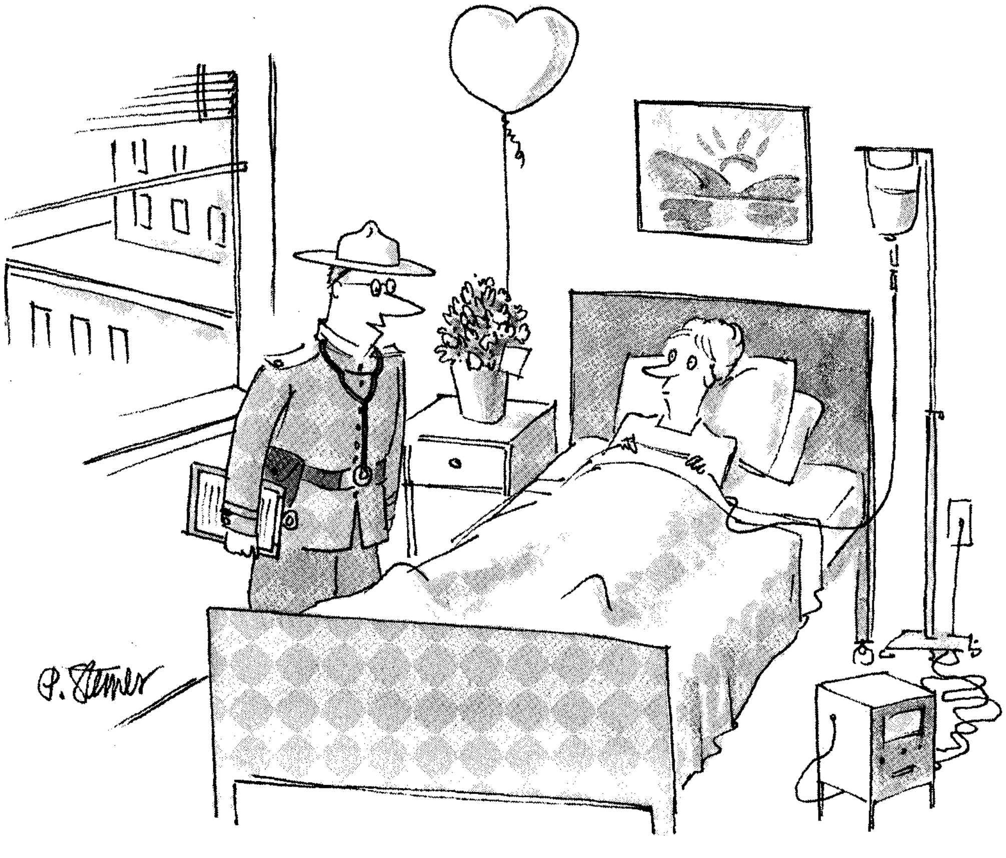
"No," Sandy said. "There'd have to be another explanation—or else you can just put me away! And I don't think I'm crazy."

The next time Ofshe visited Ericka, she said she believed that her mother was still a member of the cult. She related a recent incident in which Sandy had come to visit her at the house of Pastor Ron Long and had given her the cult's "death kiss." Ofshe asked her to describe it. What made it different from an ordinary kiss? Ericka couldn't say. Ofshe later asked the pastor and his wife if they had seen Sandy kiss Ericka, and they described it as an ordinary peck on the cheek.

Ofshe now saw Paul Ingram for a third time. Schoening recognized the look on Ingram's face when he came into the interview room. He was beaming. Ingram was always proud of himself after he had come up with a new memory. He handed Ofshe a three-page written confession. Ofshe read it through. "Daytime: Probably Saturday or Sunday Afternoon," the confession began, very much like a movie script.

> In Ericka's Bedroom on Fir Tree. Bunk Beds set up. Ericka + Julie are sharing the room. I ask or tell Paul Jr. + Ericka to come upstairs. . . . I tell them to undress. Ericka says "But Dad," I say "Just get undressed and don't argue" From my tone or the way I say it, neither objects and they undress themselves. I'm probably blocking the door so they could not get out. . . .
>
> I tell Ericka to kneel and to caress Paul's genitals. When erect I tell her to put the penis into her mouth and to orally stimulate him. . . .
>
> I have her lie on the floor. I caress her vagina and breasts and probably orally caress her vagina. I have vaginal sex. Paul watches all of this. If she did not have an orgasm I would have stimulated her with my fingers until she did.
>
> I may have told the children that they needed to learn the sex acts and how to do them right. That it is important that each participant have a pleasurable experience.
>
> I may have anal sex with Paul, not real clear. . . .
>
> The ability to control Paul + Ericka may not come entirely from me. It seems there is a real fear of Jim or someone else. Someone may have told me to do this with the kids. This is a feeling I have.

Here was a detailed, explicit confession, complete with dialogue, of a scene that had never happened. So far, the ex-



"We're borrowing the best features of the Canadian system."

periment had taught Ofshe just how much pressure it took to make Ingram comply with his demands, and the answer was remarkably little. The next task was to determine whether Ingram would admit that the confession was false. But he was unshakable about this. "It's just as real to me as anything else," he maintained.

Ofshe now had serious doubts about whether Ingram was guilty of anything, except of being a highly suggestible individual with a tendency to float in and out of trance states, and of having a patent and rather dangerous eagerness to please authority. He suspected Ericka of being a habitual liar. Throughout the investigation, Julie's accusations had followed Ericka's lead. Ofshe doubted whether the sisters had ever intended their charges to be drawn into the legal arena. Once the charges had been filed, Ofshe believed, the sisters pasted over the inconsistencies in their original accusations with ever more fanciful claims. The whole misadventure, it seemed to Ofshe, was a kind of mass folly—something that would be suitable mainly for folklorists if it were not that innocent people's lives were being crushed. When Ofshe left Olympia, he was convinced that he was seeing a new Salem in the making. The witch trials, he believed, were about to begin.

CHRIS listens to his older brother, Jim, talk about how Chris was lost in a shopping mall when he was five years old. "It was 1981 or 1982. I remember that Chris was five. We had gone shopping at the University City shopping mall in Spokane. After some panic, we found Chris being led down the mall by a tall, oldish man (I think he was wearing a flannel shirt). Chris was crying and holding the man's hand. The man explained that he had found Chris walking around, crying his eyes out, just a few moments before and was trying to help him find his parents."

This scene comes from an experiment conducted by Elizabeth F. Loftus, a professor of psychology at the University of Washington in Seattle. It was part of a study to determine whether false memories can be implanted and come to be believed with the same assuredness as one believes real memories. Chris, who is fourteen, has no memory of ever being lost in a shopping mall, but when he is told this story by a person he regards as an authority—his older brother—his usual resistance to influence falls away. Just two days later, when Chris is asked to recall being lost, he has already attached feelings to this non-event: "That day, I was so scared that I would never see my family again. I knew that I was in trouble." The next day, he recalls that his mother told him never to do that again. On the fourth day, he recalls the old man's flannel shirt. By day five, he can see the stores in the mall. He can even recall fragments of conversation with the old man. When Chris is finally told by his older brother that the lost-in-the-mall memory is false, he is shaken: "Really? I thought I remembered being lost . . . and looking around for you guys. I do remember that. And then crying, and Mom coming up and saying 'Where were you? Don't you—don't you ever do that again.' "

The research that Loftus and others have been conducting on memory threatens many of the most deeply held convictions of psychology—most prominently, the concept of repression, which is the cornerstone of Freudian theory. The theory has it that, like denial—which pushes aside painful thoughts that are a part of the present—the act of repression blocks painful or dangerous memories of past events from gaining consciousness. These repressed memories, feelings, wishes, or desires lurk in the unconscious and may cause a person to act in an irrational and apparently self-defeating manner. The whole point of psychoanalysis is to bring repressed material into consciousness, where it can be identified and disarmed.

According to the repression theory, patients may recover memories of childhood trauma in therapy; on rare occasions, such memories may simply pop into consciousness as a result of being cued by something in the surroundings. A woman named Eileen Franklin was playing with her five-year-old daughter in San Mateo, California, in 1989, when she suddenly recalled the expression on the face of a childhood friend who had been murdered twenty years before. In therapy, more fragments of that memory returned. She remembered having seen her father sexually assaulting her friend in the back of a Volkswagen van and later crushing her friend's skull with a rock. This, at least, is the story she told on the witness stand. Franklin earlier had told her brother and mother that the memory had come to her while she was under hypnosis. The State of California does not admit hypnotically enhanced recollections. By the time she got to court, she had changed her account. Based primarily on Franklin's description of the recovered memory, the jury convicted her father of murder in the first degree.

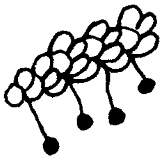
Similarly, when Frank Fitzpatrick, a thirty-eight-year-old insurance adjuster in Rhode Island, found himself in great mental pain and could not understand the cause of such anguish, he lay on his bed and began to remember the sound of heavy breathing. "Then I realized I had been sexually abused by someone I loved," Fitzpatrick later told the New York *Times*. Eventually, he was able to put a name to his abuser: Father James Porter, who had been his priest in North Attleboro, Massachusetts, three decades before. "Remember Father Porter?" Fitzpatrick asked in an ad he placed in newspapers in 1989, as part of a search for other victims. More than a hundred people have since come forward. Most of them had never forgotten the abuse; for a small number of others, there was a sudden realization, when they heard about the case on the radio or on television, that it had happened to them.

Public awareness of recovered memories of abuse increased with the 1991 revelation by Roseanne Barr Arnold that she remembered being sexually abused as a child by her parents. The same year, Marilyn Van Derbur, a former Miss America, said she had repressed memories of childhood sexual abuse by her father until she was twenty-four years old. Changes in legislation have opened a floodgate of accusations in several states, Washington among them, where the statute of limitations has been adjusted to allow civil litigation within three years of the date the abuse is remembered, regardless of when it was committed. Moreover, if the victim can't afford therapy, the state will pay for it, and this has led some critics to charge that both therapists and clients have an incentive to search for memories of abuse that may not have happened. Many of the recovered memories are of satanic-ritual abuse.

Survivor self-help books, such as

"The Courage to Heal," by Ellen Bass and Laura Davis, advocate bringing civil suits against perpetrators—who are usually the victim's parents—because criminal charges are difficult to prove. "Remembering Incest & Childhood Abuse Is the First Step to Healing," said a 1992 ad from Adult Survivors of Child Abuse, a California treatment center, and that statement fairly characterizes the premise of the survivor movement. Along with an 800 number for counselling, the ad lists symptoms of unremembered abuse: "mood swings, panic disorder, substance abuse, rage, flashbacks, depression, hopelessness, anxiety, paranoia, low self-esteem, relapse, relationship problems, sexual fear, sexual compulsion, self-mutilation, borderline personality, irritable bowel, migraine, P.M.S., post-traumatic stress, bulimia, anorexia, A.C.O.A., obesity, multiple personality, hallucinations, religious addiction, parenting problems, and suicidal feelings." This broad list parallels other checklists, in survivor books and in workshops, where people are often told that the absence of memories of abuse is no indication that the abuse did not take place.

Last year, in reaction to the rise of charges and lawsuits, a number of accused parents formed the False Memory Syndrome Foundation, in Philadelphia. Within a year, more than 3,700 people had come forward (including the parents of Roseanne Arnold). The foundation discovered that these people had much in common. For one thing, most of their marriages—about eighty per cent—were still intact, and usually only the husband had been accused. The couples were also financially successful, with a median annual income of more than sixty thousand dollars. The majority had college educations. Most of them reported having frequently eaten meals together as a family and having gone on family vacations. About seventeen per cent of the accusations involved satanic-ritual abuse. The accusers were adult children, ninety per cent of them daughters. In eleven per cent of the cases, siblings echoed the allegations, although in seventy-five per cent of the cases the siblings did not believe the charges.



Nearly all the accusers in such cases have recovered their memories in therapy. Ericka Ingram told the defense attorneys, "I'm going to a counsellor and she's helping me to remember," but she would not elaborate or disclose the counsellor's name.

Many people who feel themselves to be falsely accused believe that their children were coaxed or bullied into bringing charges by therapists or counsellors who used their authority to persuade vulnerable clients that the complex problems they experience in adult life can be attributed to a single, simple cause: childhood abuse. Like their children, some of these aggrieved parents have taken their complaints to the courtroom—in their case, in the form of lawsuits against their children's therapists. Judges and juries all over the country are struggling with the concept of repression and the reality of recovered memories.

"In Salem, the conviction depended on how judges thought witches behaved," notes Paul McHugh, who is the director of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Johns Hopkins University. "In our day, the conviction depends on how some therapists think a child's memory of trauma works." McHugh contends that "most severe traumas are not blocked out by children but are remembered all too well." He points to the memories of children from concentration camps and, more recently, to the children of Chowchilla, California, who were kidnapped in their school bus and buried in sand for many hours, and who remembered their traumatic experience in excruciating detail. These children required psychiatric assistance "not to bring out forgotten material that was repressed, but to help them move away from a constant ruminative preoccupation with the experience," McHugh says.

Despite the common acceptance of the concept of repression, some psychological researchers, such as Loftus, make the point that repression is merely a theory and has never been demonstrated by scientific experimentation. And, even if repression does function in the way that therapists who work with recovered memory suppose, is it possible to repress repeated, long-term abuses, some of which began in infancy and lasted well into adult years? The awkwardness of explaining this mechanism is evident in the answers that members of the Ingram family gave to investigators and defense attorneys. After Ingram had described a mass rape of his family by Rabie and Risch, Schoening asked, "They leave, then what—you as a family do what?"

"As I recall, I lock up the house and, uh, I don't recall any conversation," Ingram said. "It's kind of like, once the situation's over, we go into a different memory. . . . We're back to normal, if that's a way to put it."

Again, explaining how he would forget, as he drove home, that he had taken part in a satanic ritual, Ingram theorized, "At some point you block the memory and your conscious memory takes over. It's like I couldn't function up here on a day-to-day basis knowing what I had done."

Frequently, the victims remember being told not to remember. Sandy explained how she forgot having been raped on the kitchen floor by Rabie in August of 1988 this way: "Then he said . . . that I wouldn't remember anything and for me to finish washing the dishes." Ericka related that after a satanic ritual "my father would carry me back to my room and he would always say 'You will not remember. You will not remember. This is a dream.' "

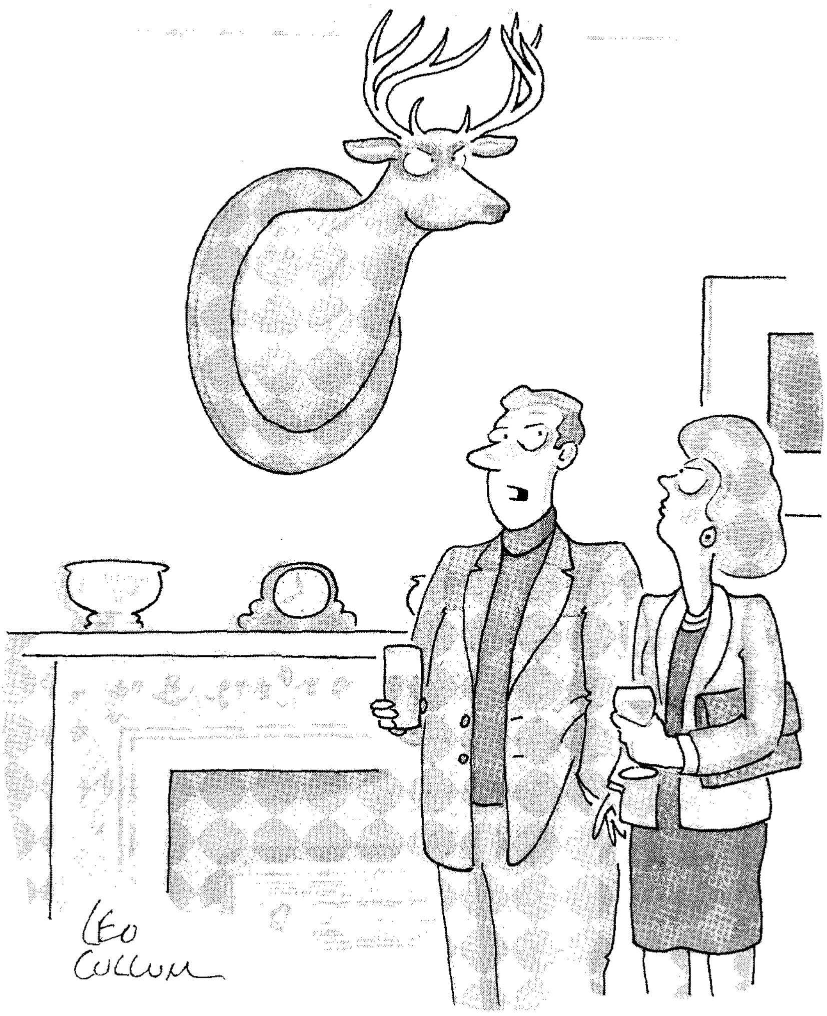
These theories were supported all along by police officers and mental-health professionals who had been brought in to counsel the Ingrams and who often reassured the victims and the investigators alike that such wholesale, instant repression is completely normal.

"Tell me why it is that you wouldn't leave," Sax Rodgers asked Sandy after she described newly recalled incidents of abuse.

"Well, what they've explained to me is that because of what happened to me, that I repressed everything as a defense or a survival mechanism and that's why it's hard for me to remember. That it's all there and that I will remember it all, but it's . . ." She trailed off hopelessly. Her psychiatrist had provided her with this explanation.

One can see the handiwork of five different psychologists and counsellors who talked to Ingram during six months of interrogations. "Two guys just anally rape you against your will, you say," Rodgers observed, referring to one of Ingram's accusations against Rabie and Risch. "You have been a police officer since 1972. . . . Why didn't you go report them?"

"I have also been a victim since I was



"He was very old and quite sick."

five years old, and I learned very early on that the easiest way to handle this was to hide it in unconscious memory, and then you didn't have to deal with it," Ingram replied.

"As in all psychology it is necessary to understand that the more severe the incident the deeper the repression and the more difficult it is to disclose," Under-Sheriff Neil McClanahan, of the Thurston County Sheriff's Office, states in one of several papers he has written on the Ingram case. Like several of the other officers involved in this case, McClanahan sees himself as a psychological authority; in fact, he has become a registered counsellor in the State of Washington and is involved in working with Olympia's survivor groups. Many members of these groups claim to have been ritually abused and have received diagnoses of multiple-personality disorder. McClanahan has lectured on satanic-ritual abuse in survivor workshops. "Just to hear the words, 'I believe you,' can make all the difference in the world to a ritual abuse survivor and oftentimes begins the process of trust, hope, and healing," McClanahan writes. Those are words that he has often spoken to Julie and Ericka Ingram.

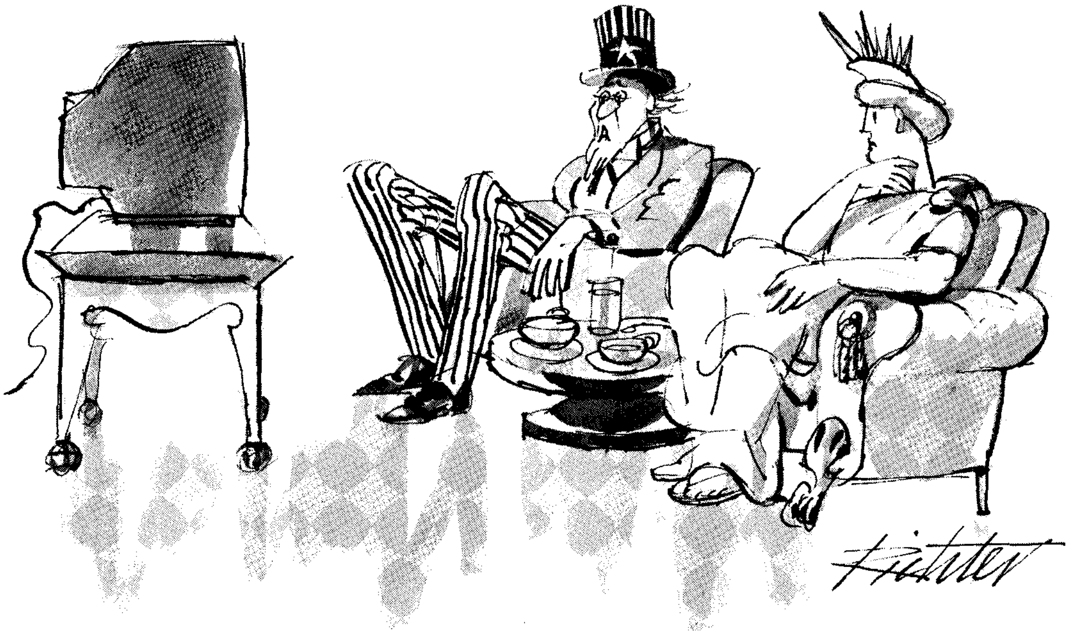
These two hypotheses form the intellectual frame of the Ingram investigation: first, that the depth of the repression is a function of the intensity of the trauma; and, second, that victims must be believed. Once a victim's account is believed, the evidence in a case may be stretched to fit it. Often, it's a big stretch. McClanahan accounts for the absence of scars on the Ingram daughters by saying that it is not uncommon for survivors to believe there are scars, because they've been conditioned to believe things that aren't true. He also explains why the sisters couldn't be given lie-detector tests: "Our survivors are very traumatized. To question their credibility would cause them to be re-traumatized. They're so fragile." In response to the fact that teams of officers and an anthropologist from the local college dug up the Ingram property looking for the burial ground of murdered babies and turned up only a single elk-bone fragment, McClanahan says the ground was so acidic that the bones disintegrated. In response to the fact that months of the most extensive investigation in the county's history produced no physical evidence that any crimes or rituals ever took place, Joe Vukich says, "We shouldn't have found any. These guys were police officers. We expected to find a lot or nothing. We did find a couple pieces of bone. Obviously, something had happened."

In a paper that Elizabeth Loftus presented to the American Psychological Association last year, she asked, "Is it fair to compare the current growth of cases of repressed memory of child abuse to the witch crazes of several centuries ago?" Posing that question has caused her to become an object of scorn to many victims' advocates. She wrote about the "great fear" of witches that caused the witch-hunts to occur:

> There are some parallels but the differences are just as striking. In terms of similarities, some of the stories today are actually similar to stories of earlier times (e.g., witches flying into bedrooms). In terms of differences, take a look at the accused and the accusers. In the most infamous witch-hunt in North America, 300 years ago in Salem, Massachusetts, three-fourths of the accused were women. . . . Today, they are *predominantly* (but not all) men. Witches in New England were mostly poor women over 40 who were misfits. . . . Today, the accused are often men of power and success. The witch accusations of past times were more often leveled by men, but today the accusations are predominantly leveled by women. Today's phenomenon is more than anything a movement of the weak against the strong. There is today a "great fear" that grips our society, and that is fear of child abuse.

IN February, 1989, Jim Rabie and Ray Risch waived their right to a speedy trial in exchange for limited freedom: they were fitted with electronic bracelets and confined to their homes. It was just as well that they couldn't go out in public, for the satanic-ritual-abuse allegations had surfaced in the pretrial hearings, and the county was in shock.

Richard Ofshe sent a report to Tabor which outlined his concerns about the truthfulness of the alleged victims' stories. When Tabor refused to turn the re-



"I must confess, I'm starting to prefer basketball to baseball."

port over to the defense as exculpatory evidence—on the ground that, in his opinion, it was not real evidence—Ofshe complained to the presiding judge of the court, and the judge agreed to make the report available to the defense attorneys. Ofshe's report landed a shattering blow to an already shaky case.

When Rabie and Risch were offered deals that would slash their jail time if they confessed, neither man would agree. In addition, the other people who had been named by the daughters as members of the cult maintained their innocence, and there was no evidence to dispute their word. Beyond that, the months and months of work around the clock had taken an immense personal toll on the detectives. One marriage had broken up. Joe Vukich noticed that other officers were shying away from him in the hallway; he could only imagine how zombie-like he must look to them. The fact that the investigation was consistently thwarted by a total lack of evidence added to the explosive pressures. The defense attorneys worried that Vukich, especially, was lurching out of control. During one court hearing, they stationed a private detective in a chair directly behind him, because they were concerned that he might draw his gun and shoot the defendants.

What set this tinderbox ablaze was a discovery made thousands of miles away, in the Mexican border town of Matamoros, in April, 1989. Police uncovered a ritual slaughterhouse on a ranch operated by a gang of drug smugglers. Thirteen mutilated corpses were exhumed, including that of a twenty-one-year-old University of Texas student named Mark Kilroy, who had been kidnapped as he walked across the international bridge toward Brownsville, Texas, a month before. The cult blended elements of witchcraft and Afro-Caribbean religions, but the main influence seems to have been a 1987 John Schlesinger film about devil-worship called "The Believers." The Matamoros cult lent an air of reality to the satanic hysteria that had taken root in the media. Agents for Geraldo Rivera and Oprah Winfrey were quickly on the scene.

"The discovery sent a shock wave through this part of Mexico and Texas and throughout the rest of the world," Rivera said on his show a couple of weeks later. "But, unbelievably bizarre as the Brownsville incident is, it is nothing viewers of this program hadn't heard before." Rivera had on his program a former F.B.I. agent named Ted Gunderson, who identified himself as a satanic-cult investigator. "I'd like to tell you right now, the next burial ground that we will learn about will be in Mason County, Washington," Gunderson announced. Mason County is next door to Thurston County. "We've located a number of burial grounds in Mason County, and they can't possibly go out and dig them all up, because there's too many of them," he added.

Gunderson's announcement rocked the state of Washington. Soon he arrived and led a search team of private aircraft and television-news helicopters through the river valleys in the Olympic National Forest. Heat-seeking devices scanned the terrain, searching for the warmth of decomposing bodies. One of the helicopters landed on property belonging to Under-Sheriff Neil McClanahan's parents. The searchers informed them that there was a satanic burial ground close by.

Although Thurston County authorities looked upon this frenzied hunt for bodies with official dismay, the truth is that they felt somewhat relieved, for the county had exhausted its own budget on the Ingram case and on the additional expense of conducting nighttime aircraft patrols that were intended to spot the bonfires of satanic cults. (Several fraternity beer busts were raided.) Governor Booth Gardner now approved a fifty-thousand-dollar grant to continue the investigation, and the sheriff's office went to the state legislature seeking seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars for bulletproof vests, night-viewing scopes, and electronic surveillance equipment. (That request was denied.) The sheriff's office also petitioned the county commissioners for a hundred and eighty thousand dollars. McClanahan showed the commissioners a short video about satanic-ritual abuse, on which a number of therapists spoke of the need for greater public support of its victims. "We are now hearing these reports from literally hundreds of therapists in every part of the United States that have amazing parallels," Dr. D. Corydon Hammond, a mild-faced professor at the University of Utah School of Medicine, said on the video. "What we're talking about here goes beyond child abuse or beyond the brainwashing of Patty Hearst or Korean War veterans. We're talking about people in some cases who . . . were raised in satanic cults from the time they were born—often cults that have come over from Europe, that have roots in the S.S. and death-camp squads, in some cases.” One theory Hammond has publicly elucidated, which was not explained in the video, is that the mind-control techniques used in such cults were developed by satanic Nazi scientists, and that the scientists were captured by the C.I.A. and brought to the United States after the war. The main figure was a Hasidic Jew who saved himself from the gas chambers by assisting his Nazi captors and instructing them in the secrets of the Cabala. Thus a note of anti-Semitism, which is almost always present in demonology, was sounded. “The observations of experienced therapists leave little doubt that children in our society are at risk of being ritually abused,” the narrator of the video concluded. “An appropriate response on the part of professionals requires that we be willing to suspend disbelief and begin to watch for the telltale indicators of this most severe and destructive form of child abuse.” The commissioners granted the budget request. Eventually, the Ingram investigation would cost three-quarters of a million dollars.

For weeks, Schoening and Vukich had pressured Ingram to come up with names of cult members to match the additional names that Julie had produced. Ingram had been praying and visualizing with Pastor Bratun, and when he was alone he fasted and spent much of his time speaking in tongues. On April 13th, he began four days of disclosures. He produced ten names of past and present employees of the Thurston County Sheriff’s Office. He also named members of the canine unit, and described a scene in which the dogs had raped Sandy.

That was too much, even for investigators who had been willing to believe everything so far. Five outraged employees of the sheriff’s office whom Ingram had implicated took lie-detector tests. All passed except one, and no one paid any attention to the man who failed. The common wisdom in the department now was that Paul Ingram had controlled the investigation from the beginning. This latest series of disclosures was his masterstroke, the thinking went: he had been protecting the cult all along, and by discrediting himself in this fashion he would insure that his testimony was worthless. Even so, the demoralized detectives had to reconsider their case against Rabie and Risch. The possibility that the two were innocent apparently never arose in the discussion. The question was simply: Is there any way left to prosecute them—any evidence at all? As the case was falling apart, Ericka and Julie finally consented to allow Loreli Thompson to examine them for scars, the idea being that perhaps she could see something the doctor in Seattle could not. Thompson found nothing. Earlier, Ericka had told of being cut with a knife on her torso and had said she had a three-inch scar, but when she exposed her stomach and pointed to the area Thompson couldn’t see anything. She stretched the skin to make sure. Ericka’s advocate thought she could see a slight line. A family doctor finally said she had discovered a tiny, L-shaped scar, but no one else could discern it.

“I’m writing this to you to maybe help fill in the blank in your investion,” Julie stated in a letter to Tabor on April 26th. She maintained that she did have a scar on her left arm, from a time when her father had nailed her to the floor. She told of other scars from ceremonial incisions. Then she described a scene in which she had been tortured by her father, Rabie, and Risch with a pair of pliers. Paul had visualized such a scene months before, and Julie had denied several times that it had occurred. Now she wrote, “One time, I was about 11, my mom open my private area w/them and put a piece of a died baby inside me. I did remove it after she left it was an arm.”

In an effort to buoy the depressed investigators, McClanahan wrote, “On May 1, 1989, the trials of Jim Rabie, Ray Risch and Paul Ingram are scheduled to begin. This office has done a remarkable job in uncovering the first ritualistic abuse investigation that has been confirmed by an adult offender involved directly with the offenses in the nation’s history. . . . Clearly we are on the cutting edge of knowledge being gained from ritual abuse.”

Actually, all charges of satanic abuse faded away. But Paul Ingram spared the investigators any further embarrassment by deciding to plead guilty to six counts of third-degree rape. Both Ericka and Julie had written him saying that he owed them that much. Sandy, who had initiated divorce proceedings, also urged him to plead guilty. The judge delayed the sentencing when it was learned that Julie had been sent a threatening letter. “Hows my very special little girl?” the letter read. “Do you realize how much trouble you caused our family? You’ve really blow this one and to tell you the true you’ve broke us up forever you’ll never be a part of our family again. You’ve hurt you mom so bad you’ve destroy her she wants to die . . . you do realize that there are many people that would like to see you dead and a few that are hunting for you.” It was signed, “Your ex Father, Paul.” As soon as Detective Thompson saw the letter, she recognized the handwriting: Julie had written it to herself. Under-Sheriff McClanahan explained the forgery as behavior typical of ritual-abuse victims, who have been conditioned to exaggerate. “She just wanted us to believe her,” he said.

Two days after Ingram pleaded guilty, the prosecutor dropped the charges against Rabie and Risch. They had been in custody a hundred and fifty-eight days.

In May, 1989, Richard Ofshe had a telephone conversation with Paul Ingram in which he urged him to try to withdraw his guilty plea before the sentencing. Ingram said that although he had been having doubts himself about the validity of some of his memories, he was still hopeful that he would be able to fill in the blanks with new memories that would explain the many contradictions in his own stories and those of his wife and children.

“I’ll tell you something, Paul—you are never going to get them,” Ofshe said. “There is no way that you are going to be able to remember anything that is going to reconcile all the lies that have been told about this in the last few months.”

“Assuming that you are right, you know I am still not willing to make the girls get up on the stand if there is a chance that I am going to emotionally damage them for the rest of their lives," Ingram replied. He said both the prosecutor and his own attorney had told him that this might happen. Besides, he still believed that he was repressing material that could explain everything. "Let's even look at the guys that go through, like, Vietnam," he added. "They hide a lot of those memories. . . ."

"Maybe somebody can blank out one event that was just life-threatening to them, terrifying, disgusting beyond belief," Ofshe conceded. (Sometimes people will remember that something awful has happened to them, but forget the details of the incident. This is called traumatic amnesia, and it often accompanies combat or savage rapes.) "Nobody can blank out as many events as you think you blanked out—it has never happened," Ofshe went on. "Paul, everything that you have told me this evening adds up to one thing. There exists a process that you have learned to use that allows you to invent images that are consistent with what you think should be happening."

Ingram was unmoved.

Two months later, however, in his prison cell, he reconsidered. He had been keeping a log in which he divided his memories into three categories: "Definitely Happened," "Not So Definitely Happened," and "Not Sure." At the time of his plea, most of his memories had been lodged in the first category, but afterward they began an insidious migration into the other two. On the morning of July 19, 1989, the anxiety that had been building within him reached a crisis. While he was praying, he later related, he heard a murmur, "Let go of the rope." A deep feeling of peace settled over him. His mind began to clear. Suddenly, he could see that all the visualizations of rituals and abuse had been fantasies, not actual memories. He no longer believed that he was a Satanist or a child abuser, or even a victim of childhood abuse himself. The experience approximated for him a religious conversion. He wrote in his Bible, "PRI DIED TO SELF 7-19-89."

Ingram got a new lawyer, who filed a motion to withdraw his guilty plea, on the ground that he had been coerced in the course of being interrogated and had given incriminating testimony while in a trance-like state. Unfortunately, it proved too late to change his plea. All the lawyer could do was petition for leniency at the sentencing hearing, in April of 1990.

"I'm Ericka Ingram. I was the daughter of Paul Ingram," Ericka stated in a surprise appearance at the hearing. Ericka wore a simple, pale dress, and she looked wan and stricken. She asked the judge to impose the greatest possible sentence. Otherwise, "I believe he will either kill me or Julie," she warned. "He destroyed me and Julie's life and our entire family, and he doesn't care. He is obviously a very dangerous man." As she spoke, Schoening and Vukich sat in the back of the court and wept openly.

When Ericka finished, the judge asked Paul Ingram if he had anything to say.

Ingram rose and said in a clear voice, "I stand before you, I stand before God. I have never sexually abused my daughters. I am not guilty of these crimes." The judge showed no interest in this change of heart. He sentenced Ingram to twenty years in prison, with the possibility of parole after twelve years.

Ingram's motion to withdraw his guilty plea was rejected by the appellate court, in January of 1992, and by the Washington State Supreme Court, last September. The case will now go to the federal courts, but Ingram's chances there would appear to be slim: the courts have shown little inclination to grant an appeal to anyone who pleaded guilty.

When the county prosecutor's office dropped the charges against Rabie and Risch, Ericka Ingram asked an attorney named Thomas Olmstead to file a suit, which is still pending, against Thurston County for negligence in failing to supervise Ingram and Rabie. Ericka has asserted that some thirty Satanists controlled the county and conspired to derail the case. Under-Sheriff McClanahan and Detective Brian Schoening are among those Ericka has named as Satanists. "How high does this go?" Olmstead, who is a fundamentalist Christian and a former F.B.I. agent, asks. "The governor? Who knows?"

Sandy Ingram has changed her name and lives in another town with Mark. Both Chad and Paul Ross have married and moved away. Ericka is living in California. Julie remains in the Olympia area, but she now uses a different name. The Ingram family, such as it was, has been destroyed.

Jim Rabie and Ray Risch still live in Olympia, although they are widely believed to be guilty men who got away with heinous crimes. Risch works in the same automobile-repair shop where he worked before, but he is rarely given any supervisory tasks. "There isn't a day that goes by that it doesn't get brought up," he says. "The cloud is still there. It's not

WOE!

It is true, our tribe is similar to the bees,
It gathers honey of wisdom, carries it, stores it in honeycombs.
I am able to roam for hours
Through the labyrinth of the main library, floor to floor.
But yesterday, looking for the words of masters and prophets,
I wandered into high regions
That are visited by practically no one.
I would open a book and could decipher nothing,
For letters faded and disappeared from the pages.
Woe! I exclaimed—so it comes to this?
Where are you, venerable ones, with your beards and wigs,
Your nights spent by a candle, griefs of your wives?
So a message saving the world is silenced forever?
At your home it was the day of making preserves.
And your dog, sleeping by the fire, would wake up,
Yawn, and look at you, as if knowing.

—CZESLAW MILOSZ

(*Translated, from the Polish, by the author and Robert Hass.*)

a good memory." His wife reports that his mind is still scattered, and that it has been hard to keep up payments on their mobile home.

After abandoning his lobbying consultancy, Rabie worked for several months for a friend who owns a carpet shop, until customer complaints about his presence began to hurt business. Now he has a job with a vehicle-transport company. His legal bills, along with Risch's—which Rabie helped to pay—have exceeded ninety thousand dollars. Both men sued the county for false arrest and malicious prosecution, but their suit was dismissed by the United States District Court and is now before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. At this reporter's request, Rabie agreed to take another lie-detector test, which covered the same material as the one he had failed earlier. This time, he passed it.

As for the investigators, most of them have not altered their views. Under-Sheriff McClanahan, despite being denounced himself as a Satanist by Ericka Ingram, remains unswayed. "Satanic abuse is real," he says. "This case proves it."

"TODAY, this woman will come face to face with the man that she says sexually tortured her in satanic rituals for seventeen years. A show you don't want to miss," Sally Jessy Raphaël, the daytime talk-show host, said on December 2, 1991. The camera focussed on Ericka Ingram, who sat in a chair beside Raphaël.

"They were people in the community, like policemen," Ericka said as she described the cult. "There were some judges, doctors, lawyers. Different people throughout the community that had high political standings."

"What happened at the rituals?" Raphaël asked, her voice full of prodding compassion. "I know it must be pretty awful, but what happened?"

"First they would start with just, like, chanting," Ericka said. "Sometimes they would kill a baby."

"A baby?" Raphaël echoed. "Where would they get babies?"

"Sometimes people in the cult would have them just for this."

"Did this happen to you?" Raphaël asked. "You remember being on a table and people having sex with you?"

Ericka nodded.

"Wow. What else?"

"Sometimes they would drink blood," Ericka said. The members of the audience looked at her gravely, and occasionally heads shook in dismay. "One time, when I was sixteen, they gave me an abortion. I was five months pregnant. And the baby was still alive when they took it out. And they put it on top of me and then they cut it up. And then, when it was—when it was dead, then people in the group ate parts of it." A gasp arose from the audience. Later Ericka asserted, "I spent most of my life in the hospital. And that is true. And I have scars. And, I mean, doctors were just, like, looking at my body, just going—*uggh!*"

Raphaël introduced Jim Rabie, who was there trying to reclaim some of his reputation in the only forum available. "He says, even though he is innocent, his life, and that of his family, has been permanently damaged," Raphaël said.

"It destroyed a business that I had," Rabie explained, his voice cracking. "It has caused my family untold heartache."

(The audience did not appear to be interested in Rabie's problems. "Ericka, I feel so sorry for you," one woman in the audience said later. "I have no idea why she would ever bring up this guy if he was not guilty.")

Richard Ofshe and Bob Larson, a radio evangelist who has built his ministry by spreading satanic hysteria, were also on the show. "What is this whole thing about Satanism, Dr. Ofshe?" Raphaël asked.

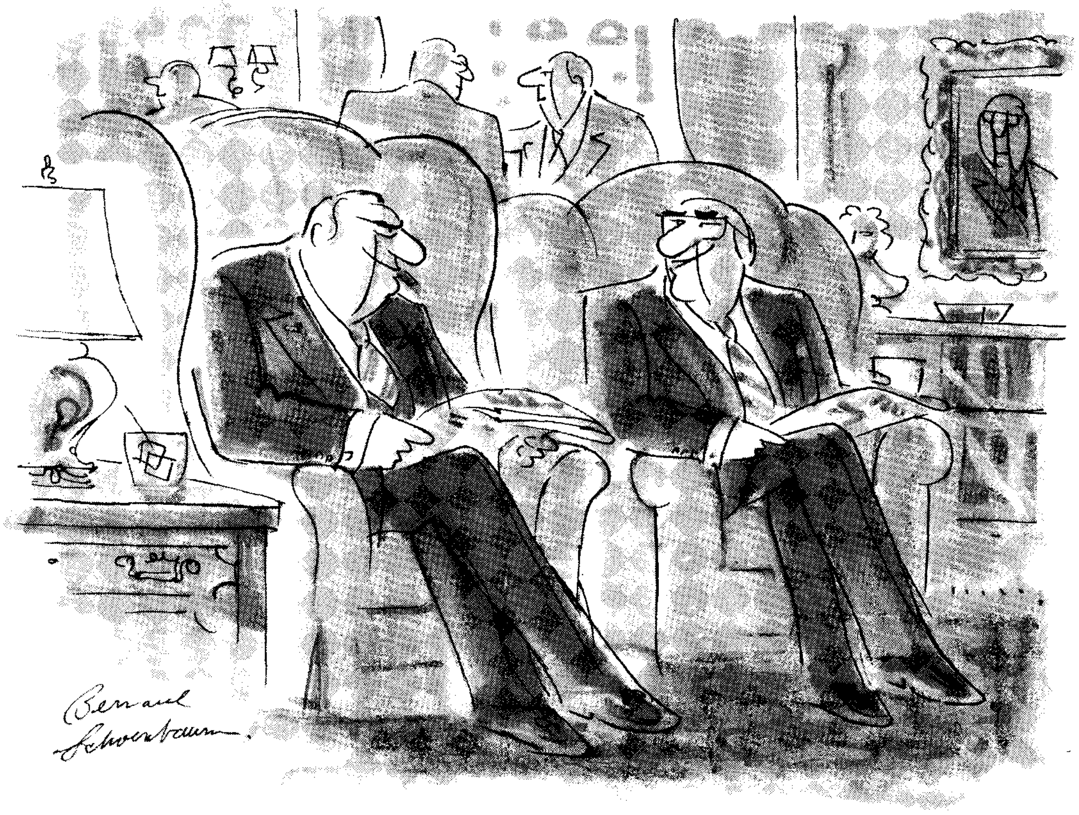
"Right now, there is an epidemic of these kinds of allegations in this country," Ofshe said. "They are totally unproven."

"There's an epidemic of Satanism in this country, not allegations," Larson interjected.

"Why would you say there is this epidemic, as a sociologist?" Raphaël asked.

"In part because it's a way of reasserting coherence and authority of fundamentalist perspectives in society," Ofshe said.

From Ofshe, Raphaël turned to the evangelist. "Bob, you've got a man here saying that in no case—and there have been one hundred court cases, I believe, maybe even more, involving satanic rituals in our country—in no case has there ever been any evidence, hard-core evidence, nor has anyone, except Ericka's



"Just when everything looks bleakest, along comes a fellow like Dole."

father, ever said that they've done that. In other words, there's never been a confession."

"He's only technically correct," Larson said.

"Technically correct," Raphaël repeated flatly. When Larson complained that no one was focussing on the number of people in therapy, Raphaël asked, "Why, if there are all these people under care, why isn't there one shred of evidence?"

"The difficulty is that the evidentiary basis of the justice system is not commensurate with what you deal with in a therapeutic process," Larson said. "When are we going to start believing people who come forward like this, instead of putting them through some type of legal litmus test?" His voice rose in indignation. "These are people who suffered the most incredible abuse!" he cried. "My God! This woman has been defecated on, urinated on—"

"By him!" Ericka cried, pointing at Rabie.

"She's experienced bestiality and group sex by this man!" Larson said as he laid a pastoral hand on Ericka's knee. "When are we going to start believing the victims?"

"Believe us!" Ericka demanded.

FOUR and a half years after his arrest, Paul Ingram, grayer now than he was during his legal hearings, lives in protective custody in a prison in a state far from Washington. He works as an editor of the prison newspaper and a clerk in the prison law library. He has always been drawn to the simple, regimented life, and prison is peculiarly agreeable to him. In certain respects, it resembles the cloistered vocation he might have chosen if he had followed his mother's wishes and become a priest. He says that he has found a deeper peace now than at any other point in his life.

"To be real honest, I have more questions about this than I have answers," he says of what happened to his family. His theory about why he "remembered" sexual and satanic abuse is that it helped him explain to himself why a man who was ostensibly a good Christian and a loving parent could have mistreated his children. "I wasn't a good father, I know," he admits. "I wasn't there for the kids. I wasn't able to communicate with them as I should have. I never sexually abused anybody. But emotional abuse—you don't like to admit it, but somebody has to. A child is a pretty delicate creature. I did a lot of hollering as a father, and I think that must have intimidated the kids. One time, Julie ran a bath that was too hot and she scalded Mark. I slapped her. Another time, she tried to run away. I saw her running down the driveway and Sandy chasing her. She was about sixteen. I ran out and caught her and pulled her hair and said she was coming back home. I remember hitting Paul Ross once on the back of the head, and I kicked him. But I never beat my children. When I got angry, that's when I hollered. There was a lack of affection they should get from a father figure."

Were there real acts of sexual abuse in the Ingram household? The testimony of the family members is contradictory, and the memories have a hallucinatory quality. Despite months of intense, unrelenting interrogation of Paul Ingram, and dozens of conflicting episodes remembered by Ingram and his wife and children, the six counts of third-degree rape that Ingram was charged with were all based on confessions elicited in the two days immediately after his arrest; they emerged in sessions with Schoening and Vukich—and, in part, with the psychologist Richard Peterson and Pastor John Bratun—during which, Ingram says, he was repeatedly assured that he would remember the abuse once he had confessed to it.

Religion certainly played a guiding role in the Ingram case. Every member of the Ingram family was primed to believe in the existence of satanic cults. Still, their belief had as much to do with popular culture and tabloid television as it did with their church. The doctrine of the Church of Living Water is that Satan is real and walks the earth, which is similar to the beliefs of many more widely recognized Protestant denominations. The rigid nature of the Ingrams' personal beliefs may have made them particularly susceptible to the notion that the family had lived two opposing lives—one as prominent Christians in their church and community, the other as covert practicing Satanists—and also that the good and aboveboard public life of the family was entirely unconscious of its furtive, monstrous underlife. One must also acknowledge that the religious beliefs of some of the investigators may have figured in their pursuing the case well past the point of logical inconsistency. The bending of all evidence to support the absurdity of an insupportable proposition is the very nature of a witch-hunt.

On the other hand, not all the investigators were deeply religious people. Their judgment may have been clouded by more common assumptions, most notably the theory of repression. Whatever the true nature of human memory, the Ingram case makes obvious the perils of a fixed idea—in this instance, the fixed idea being that the truth of human behavior, and even of one's own experience, can be cloaked by a trick of the unconscious mind, which draws a curtain of amnesia over a painful past. Unfortunately, the theory of repression also permits the construction of imaginary alternative lives, which may contain some symbolic truth but are in other respects damaging counterfeits that corrupt the currency of real experience.

One could say that the miracle of the Ingram case is that it did not go any further than it did. If Ingram's memories had not finally become too absurd for even the investigators to believe, if Rabie or Risch had accepted the prosecution's deals, if the alleged crimes of other people implicated in the investigation had occurred within the statute of limitations—if any of these quite conceivable scenarios had taken place, then the witch-hunt in Olympia would have raged out of control, and one cannot guess how many other lives might have been destroyed. But, unfortunately, what happened to the Ingram family, and to Ray Risch and Jim Rabie, is actually happening to thousands of other people throughout the country who have been accused on the basis of recovered memories. Perhaps some of the memories are real; certainly many are false. Whatever the value of repression as a scientific concept or a therapeutic tool, unquestioning belief in it has become as dangerous as the belief in witches. One idea is modern and the other an artifact of what we like to think of as a credulous age, but the consequences, depressingly, are the same. ♦

(*This is the second part of a two-part article.*)

OUR LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS

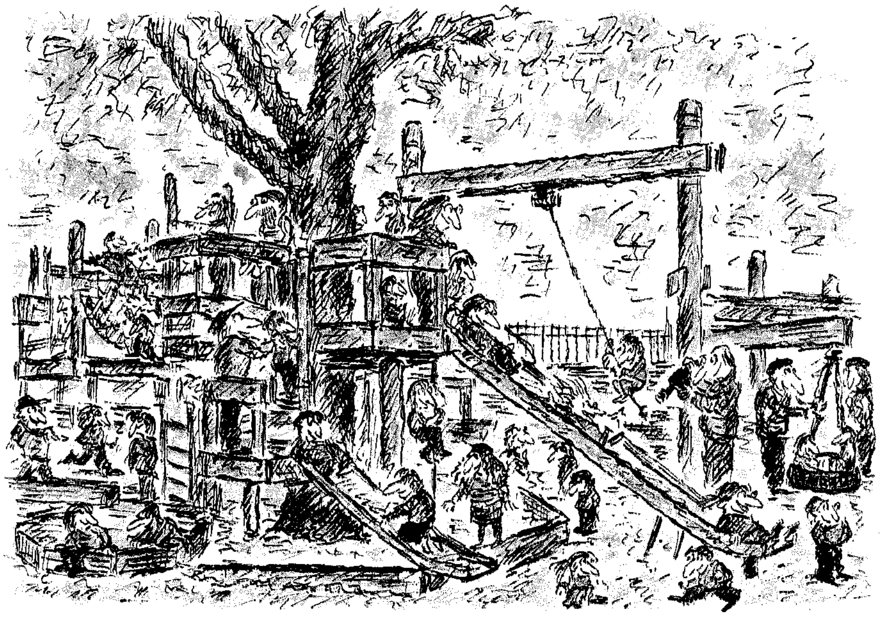
CHILD'S PLAY

Six New York playgrounds demonstrate how urban planners are finally realizing the kind of spaces children need to survive in the city.

BY TONY HISS AND ED KOREN

1. CENTRAL PARK

There's a hill just inside the west side of Central Park, at Eighty-fifth Street, that is a kind of test site for city playgrounds. The choice here is between two playgrounds, both of which are in good shape—and that's more than you can say for many New York playgrounds. The first, a traditional design, has slides in one section and swings in another and asphalt everywhere—enough to fill a parking lot. The other playground has both a brand-new four level royal-blue-and-fire-engine-red toddler structure and, for older kids, a gigantic, one-of-a-kind, chocolate-brown, pirate-ship-like wooden tree house that dates from the nineteen-seventies. The older playground is much easier to get to: it's right at the bottom of the hill, only a hop away from Central Park West. The newer playground is up a steep trek to the left.



The tree house at West Eighty-fifth Street helped launch the idea that play is an all-at-once-everywhere activity.

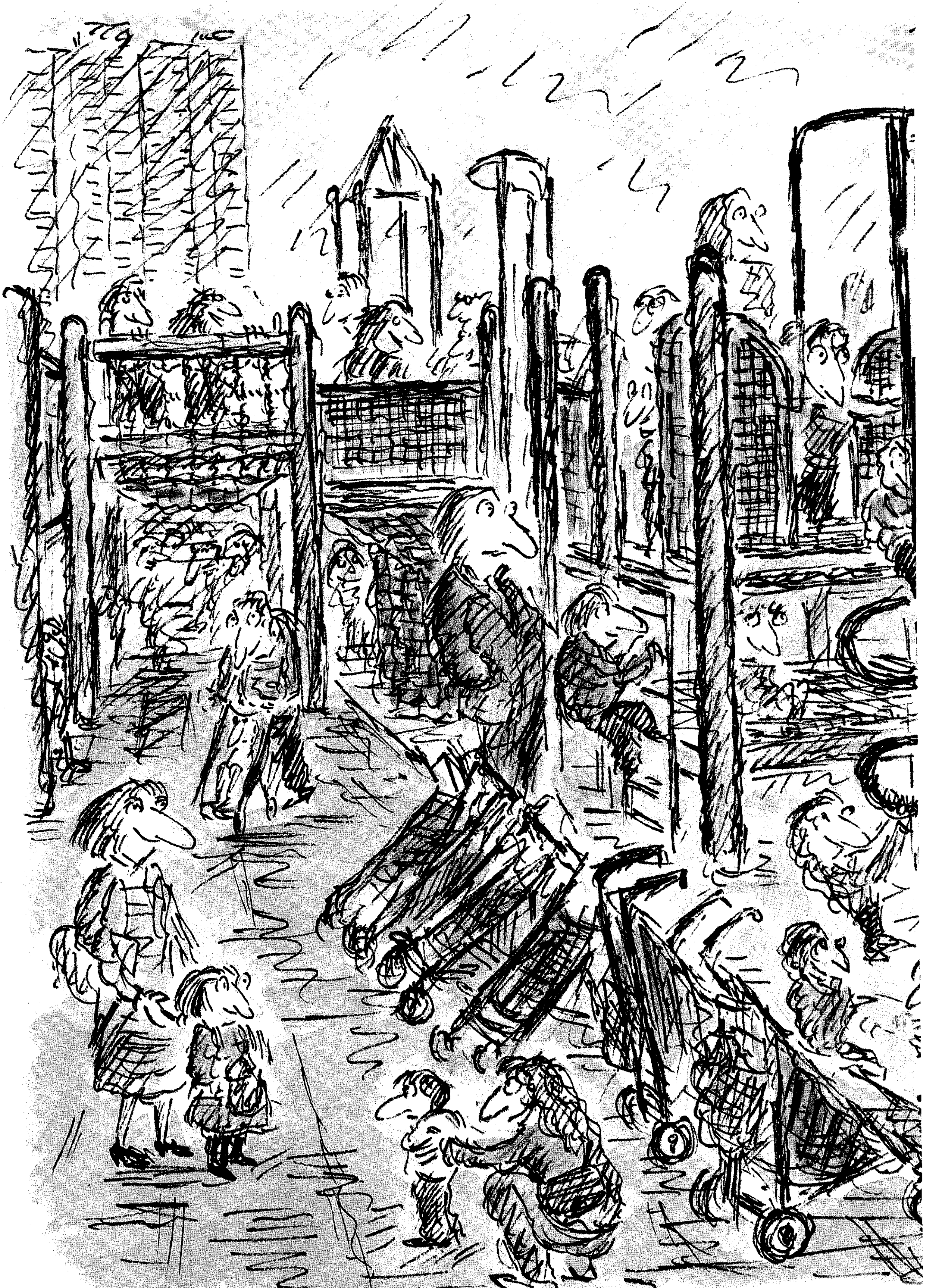
But everybody heads uphill, where it's all eagerness and elation: squeals and shrieks of delight come tumbling down the path. One day recently, the old playground was utterly silent, and deserted except for two squirrels chasing each other across a picnic table. The two playgrounds give you a glimpse of something else—the efforts of adult minds, touching and often clumsy, trying over many years to answer the enormous question of what it is that kids actually like to do most, need to do most, during running-around time. What they need to do includes making things, taking them apart, and completely rearranging all the parts. And having hideaways and meeting places, and lookouts with vistas, and places that can be transformed instantly, so that they're now a high castle, now a supermarket, now a submarine.

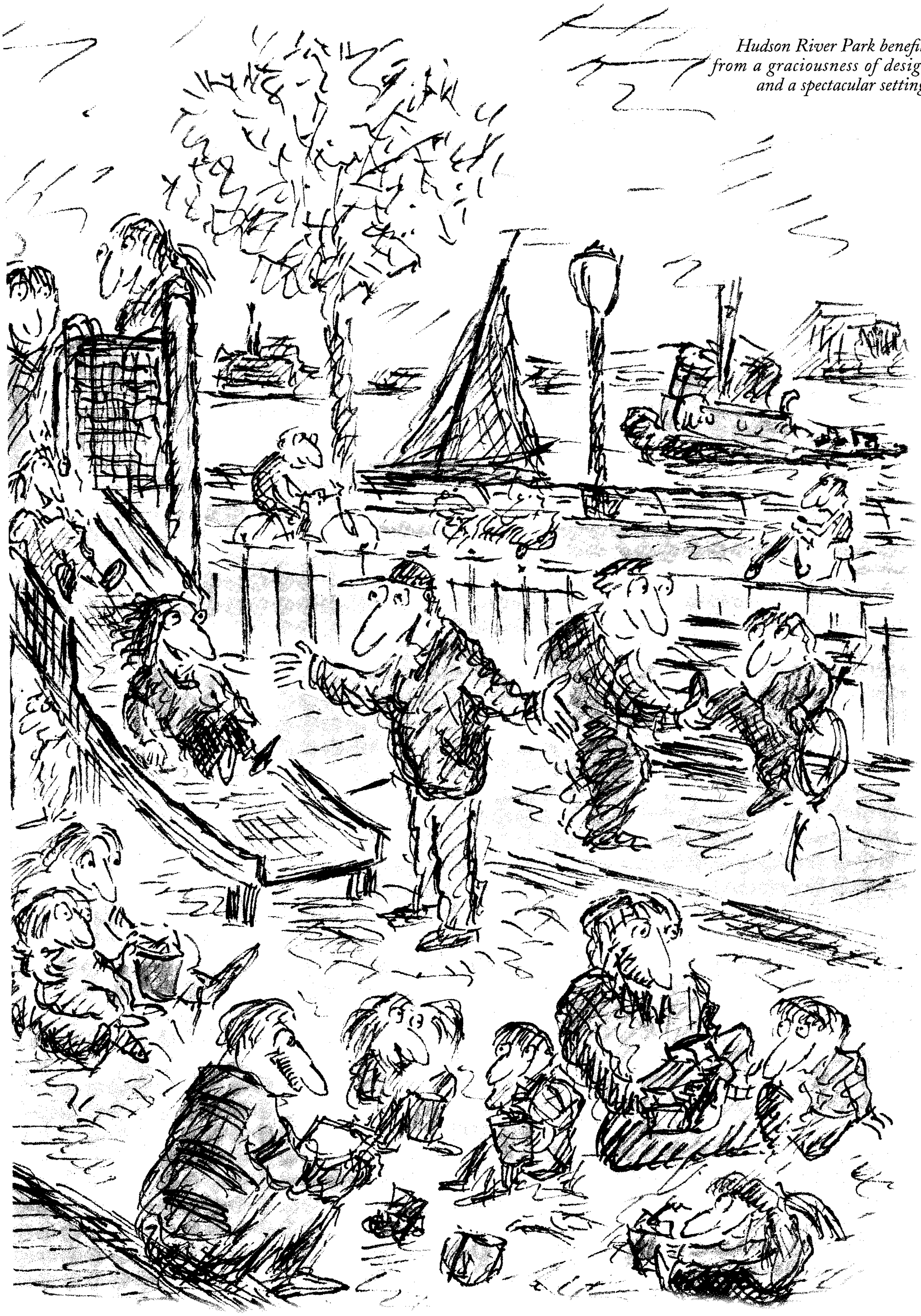
Making playgrounds more playful—and safer, because a fall on asphalt is a hard fall—has begun to endow American cities with playgrounds worth playing in. The hilltop tree house, for instance—a pioneering piece designed by the architect Abraham Rothenberg—helped launch the idea that play is an all-at-once-everywhere activity, so setting up slides ten yards away from swings is like chopping a stream into pieces to keep the rapids and the quiet pools from flowing into one another. Rothenberg's contraption, which wraps itself around an immense, elegant ash tree, connects directly to a fire pole, a swaying spiderweb of a catwalk made from loops of chain, and two slides, including one that's fifteen feet long.

A favorite game at the tree house is to scramble through the whole structure and slide, on your back, a third of the way down the high slide—then hang there, stare up at the sky, and, a minute later, plummet to the ground, arms extended, eyes still staring up at leaves and branches and light.

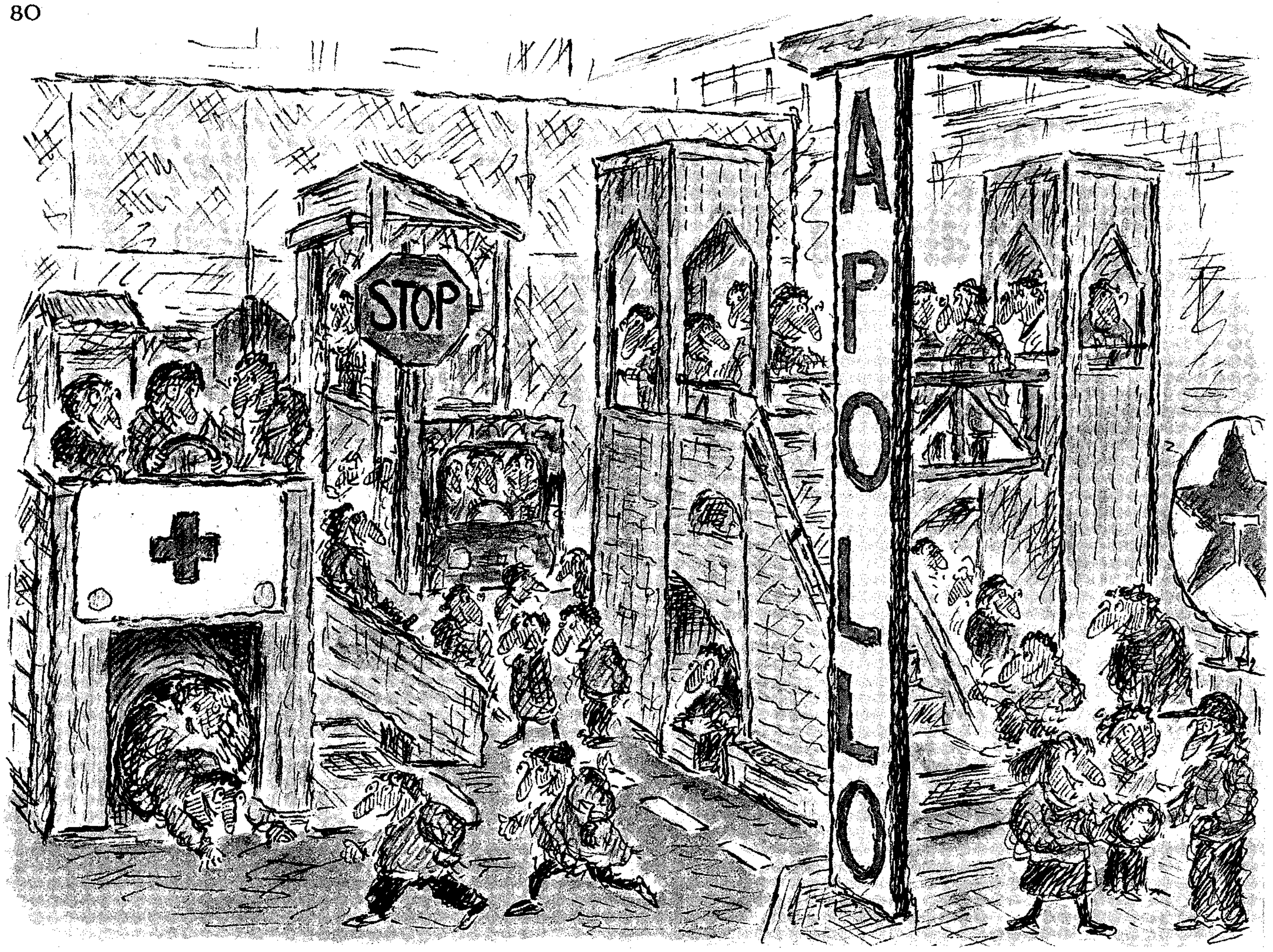
2. HUDSON RIVER PARK

In Manhattan, everyone's favorite new playground is the one in Hudson River Park, at Battery Park City, which daily draws strollers from at least as far away as Greenwich Village, a forty-five-minute walk to the north. For once, no corners were cut to save money. There's a rubberized safety surface, for instance, covering almost the entire playground; you could probably have put some fine Oriental rugs over the area for the same money. There is red webbing to climb on here, not just chains or tires, and in one of the water-play areas the water spurts from the mouths of cast-stone dogs. The graciousness of the design, by the New York landscape architects Donna Walcavage and Sonja Johansson, and the spectacular setting, looking down the Hudson to the Statue of Liberty, give the whole playground a feeling of being safely snuggled in a most extraordinary neighborhood back yard. One mother, watching her toddler career through a miniature maze, said, "It's as if someone had reached inside the minds of





Hudson River Park benefits from a graciousness of design and a spectacular setting.



There's a large garden at the P.S. 197 playground, and all the equipment has been built to look like something in central Harlem.

babies and found everything that would thrill them, and then brought all these things together in one place."

3. P.S. 197, CENTRAL HARLEM

In Harlem, kids of all ages are often displaced from playgrounds by drug users, drug dealers, or homeless people. Dr. Barbara Barlow, the director of pediatric surgery at Harlem Hospital, says that four years ago, after fifteen years of patching up children who had been badly injured playing in abandoned buildings, or who had been hit by cars, or stabbed, or shot playing in the streets, she set up the first New York City hospital-based injury-prevention program.

Now kids in Harlem can play safely in a rebuilt playground down the street from the hospital—next to P.S. 197, on 135th Street just west of Fifth Avenue. In the last four years, the number of children from Harlem treated at Harlem Hospital for serious injuries has gone down by forty-two per cent.

The P.S. 197 playground, two years old, cost only fifty thousand dollars. (The new additions at Eighty-fifth Street cost three hundred and fifty thousand.) That's mostly because one of the specialties of Sam Kornhauser, the playground's designer, is using low-paid non-professional workers and volunteers: they built it, and now the volunteers serve as caretakers and supervisors. Another Kornhauser specialty is giving playgrounds what he calls "substance." So there's a large garden, with roses and vegetables, at the P.S. 197 playground, and all the equipment has been built to look like something in central Harlem: one piece is a store; another is an apartment house with a stoop; and there's a fire engine, an ambulance, a stage like the one at the Apollo Theatre, and a crawl-through tube in a structure that represents Harlem Hospital. "You go in sick and come out well," Kornhauser says. The fire engine is a particular favorite. The other day, four kindergartners grabbed the steering wheel while a fifth yelled "Go to a Hundred and Seventh Street!" and a sixth almost drowned him out by being the siren.

4. UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

The playground of the United Nations International School, on the East River at Twenty-fifth Street, has a red rope mountain called the Eiffel Tower, and a domed pavilion called the Taj Mahal, and a pavilion based on an African hut. These are the school's way of celebrating the fact that its teachers come from forty countries and its students from a hundred and ten. Children's Playgrounds, one of the best companies offering "catalogue playgrounds," as they're sometimes called, built the United Nations School playground, and the unit, made of red pine and new tires (factory rejects)—it's one of the company's grandest contraptions (it is now available as 700-1 United Nations)—looks something like the structure a car-free America might invent to use up every tire left in the country.

There are tire swings, a tire suspension bridge, a tire tunnel you can crawl through, a tire cylinder you can climb up through, and two diagonal tire ramps, one of which has stairs that are rows of tires racked up vertically, so you can walk on their treads. A second grader said that all the kids in his class loved to play "traffic jam," which means stopping in the middle of the tunnel, so no one behind you can move.

5. THE PLAYGROUND FOR ALL CHILDREN

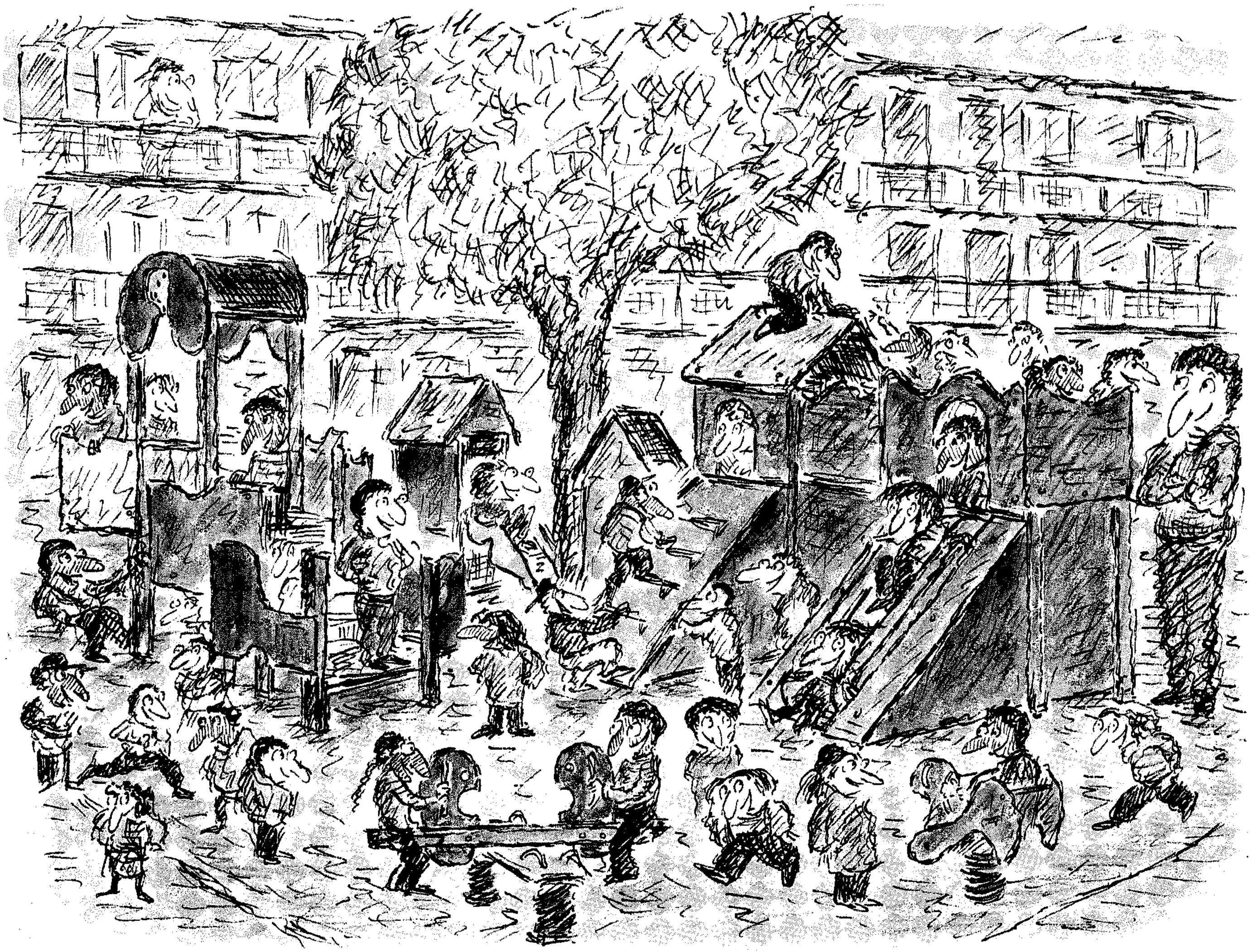
The Playground for All Children, or PAC, a three-and-a-half acre City of New York Parks and Recreation playground in Flushing Meadows–Corona Park, in Queens, is probably what all playgrounds will look like in the future, once the impact of the new Americans with Disabilities Act is fully felt. It opened nine years ago, after ten years of work, as the first playground in the country that children with disabilities and non-disabled children could enjoy and play in together—engage in what is now called "integrated play." Most ramps here, for instance, are four feet wide, so two wheelchairs can pass each other. And the swings have chains dangling in front of them, so you can pull with your arms to gain height if you can't kick with your legs.

Diane Barth, the playground's director, has also instituted a pet-facilitated therapy program, using her two certified support dogs, Spencer, a German shepherd, and Ayla, of German-shepherd and beagle lineage. The kids love it when Ayla gives them a high-five, but she is also trained to pull wheelchairs, and some support dogs can punch all the right buttons at cash machines. Ayla is one of four puppies that were found outside the playground just after New Year's of 1990.

6. HELP I, EAST NEW YORK

HELP I (pronounced "Help One") is a five-year-old transitional-housing project where homeless families can live while they're looking for permanent housing. It was built by Andrew Cuomo, and it's run by the Red Cross, and about six hundred and fifty people live there, four hundred of them kids. The turnover is constant—although slower than it was originally, because finding an apartment takes so much longer. (The average stay used to be six months; currently it's nine months.) But it's a real community, in large part because, wherever you live here, outside your front door you're looking directly at a large central playground with topnotch catalogue-playground equipment that is in almost continual use.

For older kids, there's a Children's Playgrounds structure, with one pavilion, three orange slides, and two tire climbers. All the toddler play pieces are the work of Kompan, a highly regarded Danish company, which provides bright-colored, scoop-shaped designs, made from laminated plywood and delicately scaled down for the tiniest tots. Small children at HELP I seem to give special attention to two tiny houses, red with blue roofs and blue tables and benches. Half a dozen kids at a time can sit at a table and look around and chat and stretch out and have a roof over their heads for as long as they want. ♦



The playground at HELP I provides the homeless families with a sense of real community.

FICTION

IRRESISTIBLY

BY EDITH TEMPLETON

It must have been bewildering for the guests entering the main hall that evening to be faced by an innkeeper leaning against the lintel of the wide-open glazed double doors leading into the brilliantly lighted reception rooms. Tall, portly, florid, heavy-jowled, in shirtsleeves, and wearing a green baize waistcoat with tarnished metal buttons, and black trousers glistening with grease stains, he might have been the owner of a tavern in the main square of a small market town. The sight of him seemed to conjure up homely smells of stale beer, stale gravy, sweat, and drains. With one hand resting on the bronze rosette of the doorknob while he waved a red checked napkin with the other as if intent on chasing off flies, he greeted the arriving couples one by one and offered remarks like "Lucky you turned up today. This is our day for apple strudel. And there's dumplings, too, with white cabbage stewed in wine—real wine, not vinegar, never fear." Ignoring the shrieks and howls of laughter from the latest guests, he pointed his thumb in a coarse gesture behind him and turned to the next group, now growling, "There's some sausages left over from yesterday. You'd better look sharp, they won't last forever. Speak to the missus, in the kitchen—that's where she belongs."

He was Mr. Haussman, the governor of the Union Bank of Prague, having a lark while hosting the last of the Haussman receptions in that winter of 1932. The Haussmans were Viennese. They had arrived in Prague about ten years before, and the magnitude of his banking post could be guessed, even by a little girl (as I had been then), by the fact that the substantial "villa" on the spacious, sloping grounds of the Weinberge, in our city's prime residential quarter, had been built for them by the bank before their arrival.

The Viennese like to say that we in Prague are always offended, and it is true. Always inclined to feel inferior and provincial when confronted with anyone from the capital city of what once was our Empire, we tend to bristle and to say things like "Don't forget that we had the first paved streets in central Europe while you Viennese were still slushing ankle-deep in the mud." Or, in a more jovial mood, "Count Bobby meets Count Rudy, on the Graben, in Prague. He says, 'Where've you been all this time? Been ill, or what?' Rudy says, 'No, I've been to Vienna. Funeral. Buried my mother-in-law.' Count Bobby, 'Ah, Vienna, the city of our dreams!' "

My mother soon became Mrs. Haussman's best friend, to everyone else's bewilderment. She explained this by stating that Mrs. Haussman, unlike the other Viennese, was not uppity and never gave herself airs. And, while this was true enough, the Haussmans began living on an unexpectedly grand scale, and it soon became the general opinion that it was just this quality of Mrs. Haussman's that was such a shortcoming. Because Mrs. Haussman was wrong. Not outrageously, deliberately wrong—like, say, Countess Sternborn, who had enjoyed, even in old age, behaving like a brat, never letting one forget that she once had been a chorus girl, and thus felt free, in the drawing room, to take out some of her artificial teeth and, passing them round, to ask the guests to admire how well they were made—but wrong in lesser and more deadly ways. My grandmother knew that Mrs. Haussman was wrong, even before she met her.

It was Karasek, the chef, who brought the tidings. Karasek worked for Lippert's, the largest and finest delicatessen on our most elegant avenue, the Graben, and he could always be prevailed upon to supply choice dishes for important at homes and dinner parties. "She comes and says, 'Mind, you let me have the boiled beef, too, when you've done with it,' " he told my grandmother. "I say, 'How so, Madam? The beef will be thrown away.' 'Not for me, it won't,' she says. I say, 'But, Madam, for a double-strength consommé such as you want, the beef is boiled for twelve hours—the meanest cuts, shins and shanks—and it ends up like gray rags. None of my ladies ever—' She says, 'There's always a first time. We cut it up and dress it with onion and oil and vinegar, and it makes a supper dish for the children and the governess.' "

Conversation is made up of talk, but not all talk is conversation. Finding out that Mrs. Haussman had no conversation took us in Prague less than ten minutes. Even this might have been shrugged off, considering her husband's standing, but not after the first Haussman tea party my grandmother was invited to—which she soon declared would be her last. The two dining rooms in the Haussman villa—the "everyday" one and the "good" one—were on the second floor. As soon as the table was cleared that afternoon, Mrs. Haussman went out to the landing and yelled to a manservant—thus betraying that she was not accustomed to a large house, where one rings for the staff. The manservant, in any case, shortly appeared, bearing a long jute sack, which he opened, throwing the contents—remnants of silk, tweed, and cotton—onto the parquet floor. The scandalized ladies were invited to help sort these out, kneeling and squatting, and choose the most suitable for making up into a quilt. While the ladies, still speechless, went on exchanging glances she explained that eiderdowns were expensive, while a quilt, by contrast, could be filled with rubbishy fluff, and would do splendidly for the governess's bedroom.

This, too, was resented by the guests. Whereas it had been considered only amusingly scandalous when the Countess Sternborn had once lifted her skirt at the bridge table, undone her garter, and used the tongue-shaped rubber part for erasing an error on the scoring pad, thus showing off her once famous legs, it was unforgivable that Mrs. H. should expect her guests to work for their tea by making such demands upon them, in her obsessive thriftiness.

The painter Miroslav Dalibor was, as my mother said, "not madly entertaining," but, on the other hand, "one knew what stable he came from." Being unmarried, he was also an asset for parties. I had last seen him two years earlier, when I was fifteen, but finding him now at the Haussman villa was a happy surprise. The villa's reception rooms were on the ground floor, and the moment I entered the first drawing room I could see him in the last, the third one, as the rooms were enfiladed. He was standing in a niche formed where a wall met a bay window, half hidden by the folds of the crimson velvet curtains. This was not astonishing. In whatever drawing room Dalibor happened to be, he would always place himself in a corner and as far away from the main entrance as possible. There he would remain, never milling around, never joining a group.

Various opinions were given about this behavior. There were those who said that Dalibor always felt at a disadvantage because he earned his living by doing the portraits of the wealthy and sometimes even of the famous. Yet at the same time, because it was vital for him to strike up acquaintances, it was considered that he might be taking up the stance perversely, as though to deny all that.

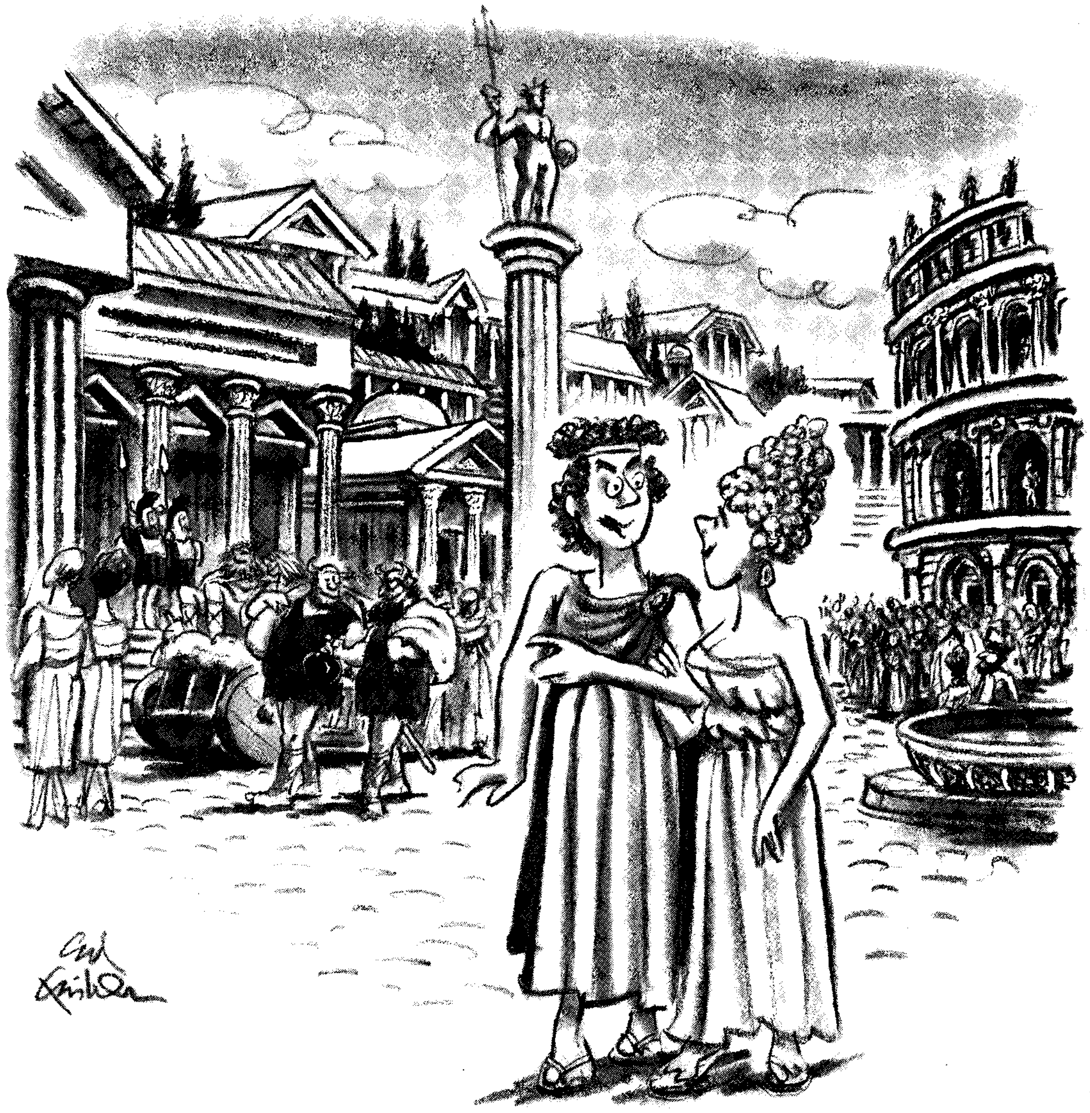
Others said that this was nonsense and plunged into further long, delicious conversations about his history and his money. There was no question of his living from hand to mouth: there was still a regular income he could draw on, from the Dalibor estates in the Burgenland. No, he was just plain snooty. True, one uncle of his had been the minister of foreign affairs in the old days. But Dalibor *père* had been nothing but a privy councillor (two-a-penny in old Austria) and had labored in some obscure ministry, too—railways or possibly pensions, I ask you. No, he was just standoffish. Was he doing us a favor coming to Prague once in a blue moon this way? He was Viennese, need one say more?

"Dalibor," I said, coming to a halt in front of him. "I am irresistibly drawn to you."

"So I see," he said. "I can't very well return the compliment, though, can I? Seeing that I'm standing here, nailed to the spot. Sufficient to say that I watched you wending your way through the throng. Will that satisfy you?"

"It will," I said, although I was aware of being less than pleased with my dress—pink net, strewn with embroidered forget-me-nots—which was a last-year's bridesmaid gown. But, since I was not yet eighteen, I had no claim to anything like a regular evening gown, and also I knew that my presence at this reception had been permitted as a special favor to me. I was grateful to Dalibor for speaking to me in the manner he had, for he was aware of a diffidence I felt not only because of my age and my dress but also because I felt tainted as compared to my schoolmates, who all had fathers at home, whereas I was the only child of a mother who had been twice divorced before the age of thirty—the first time from my father—yet who was socially acceptable everywhere, living sumptuously as she did in her mother's (my grandmother's) house in Florence Street.

Dalibor was in his late thirties—"a lovely age for a man," as my mother would have said. But he had none of the seductive glow that was hinted at by this remark. He was of medium height, and looked shorter than he actually was, owing to his build, which was sturdy, broad-shouldered, wide-chested. His pale-blond hair was wavy, but rolled into curls around the temples and at the nape of the neck, where it had been left to grow longer than was usual. The low,



"One thing I really like about the barbarians taking over. We no longer have to pay attention to what the literary crowd is doing."

very wide and bumpy forehead and the small, deep-set eyes gave him an air of brooding obstinacy.

“And why do you find me irresistible?” he asked. “This is so sudden.”

“Because— There must be about one hundred people here? Roughly?”

“Oh, yes, easily. Certainly no less. But do go on.”

“And you are the only one among them who is dressed,” I said. “Not just dressed for dinner, but in the grand manner.”

“Oh, yes,” he said. “I put on white tie so as not to be taken for a waiter. In self-defense. Because waiters in tails put on black tie, you know. Just so as not to be taken for gents.”

“True. But don’t be beastly. Do come on. Tell me, where are you off to after this? You only came here to make *acte de présence*, to kill time, didn’t you?”

He lowered his eyelids and bent his head, feigning humility, pretending to be found out. Then, straightening up, he declaimed with sarcastic solemnity, “I’m going high up. To the very heights. To the highest hill. To what you might truly call the Acropolis of Prague.”

“To the castle?” I said. “The President? But you’ve done him already, once.”

“No. But you are getting warm.”

“To the Czernin palace? That’s Foreign Affairs, isn’t it?”

“You are getting colder.”

“The Sternberg palace, the art gallery?”

“You are getting pretty hot.”

I said, “The Archbishop’s Palace!”

Once more he went through his mime of humility.

“Golly. Devastating! The Cardinal Archbishop? Golly.”

He said, “You are repeating yourself.”

“That’s because I’m so devastatingly impressed. ‘Thrilled’ isn’t the word.”

“Oh, do stop your society gushing. You’re trying to sound like your mother. Enough time once you get to her age. Behave, or I’ll never again give you a sip of whiskey from my glass, behind your mother’s back. As I did two years ago. That was a do with one hundred, too, wasn’t it?”

“Yes,” I said. “Though we’ve never done such a crowd since. But do tell me, what’s he like, the Cardinal? I’ve only seen him once or twice. That smile, sheer heaven. When he looks at you, you feel all has been forgiven.”

He said, “That smile. Carefully studied in front of the mirror. To me, he means just work. But in private he can be quite . . . Do you know what happened to me the very first time I was presented to him? To start with, there were some people milling around, secretaries and creatures. Then, as they leave—once we are left alone, with the doors closed—I fall on one knee and want to kiss the ring. He says, ‘Cut it out, brother.’ ”

He watched me laughing, remaining grave himself.

“But the priceless thing happened at another time, at a party at the Austrian Embassy. Along comes—I shan’t tell you who, because gentlemen don’t tell. Sufficient to say a cabinet minister. Staggering and weaving, in his usual state of—sufficient to say. He comes up to another guest and utters, ‘You gorgeous creature in red, come and dance with me, I insist.’ Yes, he did say ‘insist.’ And the gorgeous creature in red says, ‘I don’t think it’d be a good idea. Because for one thing I’m a man, and, for another, I’m the Cardinal Archbishop of Prague.’ ”

Then, after pretending to be astonished by my laughter, he said, glancing over my shoulder, “There goes our gracious hostess. Always true to her motto—dressed simply but with bad taste.”

And when I just nodded, he went on, “And yet, if she were *grande dame* it wouldn’t matter. She could drape herself in her kitchen curtains and get away with it. And she hasn’t even got a walk, have you noticed? She doesn’t walk, she flits like a weasel.”

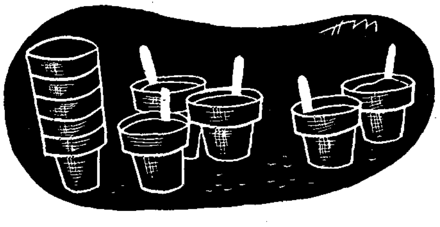
“You say that because you haven’t been asked to do her.”

He said, “No, it isn’t sour grapes. I haven’t been asked to do her, that’s true. But even if I’d been asked, I would have refused. How could I draw her? She hasn’t got a face.”

I said, “What on earth?”

“Haven’t you noticed? Each time she gets herself a new lover she takes on a new personality. The image her lover wants her to have.”

I said, “And you can tell all this when you only come here once a year, or not even once in *two* years, and stay only a few weeks? And you can’t hear all our gossip, either, because you are not really in our crowd.”



“I needn’t listen to gossip,” he said. “I look. And I see. Most people look but they don’t see.”

We fell silent. Then, glancing above my head, he said, “I believe their governess is looking for you. She’s *trying* to catch my eye and signalling that I should tell you.”

I said, “Drat that governess. I know what she wants. I’ll have to go now. The Haussmans’ driver will take me home. I was allowed to come, but only for an hour or so, because the Haussman boys are downstairs, too, and they’re all around my age, take a year, drop a year—Franz, Rudy, and Ricky. It’s idiotic, that governess—I mean, that they’ve got her at all. Ricky, the eldest, is eighteen, in his last year at school.”

He said, “Quite. Sufficient to say that they change the governess each year, and that she is always no more than twenty, and tall and blond and hefty, no matter whether she is English or French or German. Because our gracious host likes them that way. And he likes change, too.”

I said, “Golly. That’s devastating. And I’ve known them all these years. And it’s never occurred to me.”

Without replying, he lowered his eyelids and bent his head.

It should not be said that our family was alien to the world of art. Professor Wieland, Dean of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture in Prague, had supplied us with all the pictures we owned. There was a life-size portrait of my mother at the age of four, costumed for a children’s fancy-dress party in the brittle blue-silver-yellow brocaded attire of an infanta of Spain, done in the manner of Velázquez. There was my Uncle Ernest as a six-year-old, in the guise of a boy of the Styrian Alps—in chamois shorts and a green-trimmed loden coat, resting on a spade, with a basket filled with flaming-blue gentian flowers at his feet—all painted in the smoothly glossy, idyllic Biedermeier manner. The professor did admit that, in accordance with the genre, there should have been a small black-and-white dog in there instead of the gentians, but that he had not felt up to it. There was also a head-and-shoulders of my grandmother, as a young woman of twenty-eight, wearing a feather boa, which was stippled in the Divisionist manner of Segantini. And there were four large, equal-sized flower pieces, which the professor had brought to bloom in the shadowy, mushy, velvety style of Odilon Redon.

We are always dissatisfied when confronted with the portrait of someone we know. This is inevitable, because we have not known that person as the painter has. But since I had not known my mother, or Uncle Ernest or my grandmother, at the ages of four, six, and twenty-eight, respectively, I held no grudge against their portraits and was truly fond of them. The only hint of resentment I felt was in my grandmother's case, not because of her lush, fleshy beauty in the portrait—she now had a marmoreal distinction—but because in the picture she had an expression I had never seen on her. In the portrait the short, voluptuous lips were half parted, revealing a glimmer of teeth, while her eyes were half veiled and hooded, under strangely heavy lids. All this lent her an unfamiliar, unfathomable, haughty, triumphantly satisfied air that I found perplexing and troubling.

Late one afternoon, a few days after the Haussman reception, Professor Wieland came to call, explaining that, finding himself in our neighborhood, he had wanted to drop in and lay his admiration at my grandmother's feet. She was not in, as it happened, yet he could not refuse to join my mother in the drawing room for a short while.

Emma, our parlormaid, was sent to fetch me. "You'd better go in, Miss Edith," she told me. "Give a helping hand to madam your mother. Finds him a bit of heavy going. You get along and show a pretty snout. Madam your mother's got to tugging at her pearls already—that's always a bad sign."

Despite my mother's dislike of having to listen to disquisitions on theories of art, it could not be denied that Professor Wieland was an ornament in any drawing room. Tall and narrow-boned, he was a much sought dinner guest who had kept his elegant leanness even now, in his seventies. With his gold-rimmed pince-nez and short white pointed beard, he bore a striking likeness to the distinguished figure of our President Masaryk—a mold often encountered among academicians of his generation. Always formally dressed and never gesticulating, he could be relied upon to listen with a grave yet tolerant urbanity and to fill embarrassing blanks in the flow of conversation with meticulously sexless anecdotes about celebrities in the arts. I cherished this one: Brahms, asked to dinner by a rich admirer, has his glass filled as the host murmurs, "This is the Brahms among my wines." Brahms takes a sip, considers, and says, "Let's have up the Beethoven, shall we?"

As soon as I had joined my mother and the Professor, I burst out with the news that Dalibor was going to "do" the Cardinal Archbishop. It was inevitable that Dalibor should then be discussed. The tone, I knew, would be acid, because Dalibor was an almost nationally known celebrity, whereas the Professor's name had never reached anyone outside Prague society. From the beginning, Dalibor had made his name with his flattering portrait drawings—heads and hands in red chalk, on pike-gray paper, which gave even uncouth clients the conviction that they belonged to the elect. His spectacular rise to widespread fame had been achieved by his portrait of President Masaryk, which, in reproduction, was displayed, year in and year out, in the windows of most of the select shops on the seventh of March, which was the President's birthday.

"The trouble with Dalibor," the Professor said now, "is that he is supposed to be a draftsman. But he doesn't draw, he embroiders." He saw our bewildered glances and explained. "The great masters—say, Raphael, or, if you want to get contemporary, Braque or Picasso—when they draw, it's done in one single, thin, clear line. And with this, miraculously, they get depth, volume, texture, expression, all in one clean sweep. Dalibor labors. He *knits*—one plain, one purl—and then does crochet work on the edges, and the victim's head comes out of the murk like the marrow dumpling floating up in the noodle soup."

My mother nodded with what she no doubt hoped was a thoughtful air and tugged at her string of pearls.

"Yet, one could forgive him his doodling, if he were a nicer person himself," the Professor went on. "Only the great can afford to be nasty. But no, Dalibor plays the game with the cards held close to his chest, and if you try to get near him he can get quite naughty. Doubly naughty. Because he does it all so wickedly that you don't realize he is jeering at you."

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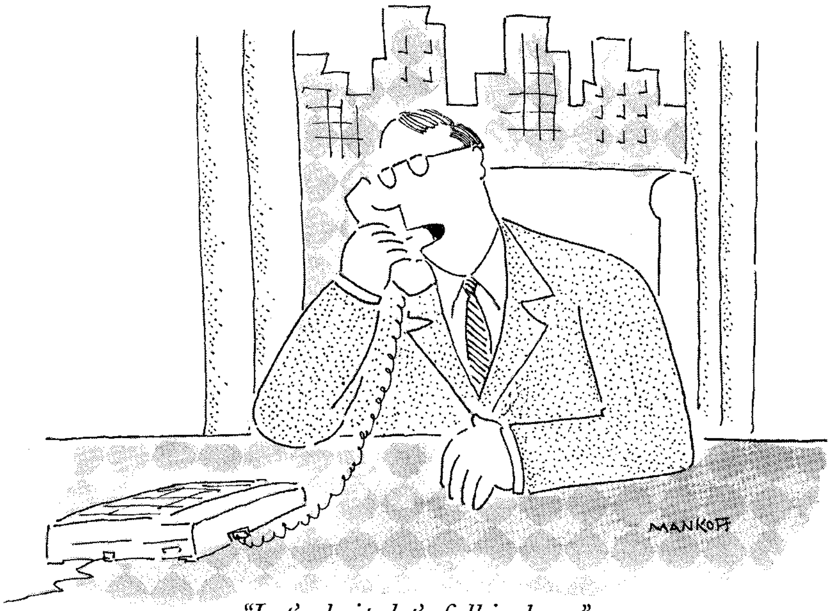


"Let's do it, let's fall in love."

one if they don't know it?" my mother said.

"That's where his wickedness comes in. He gets a thrill out of being offensive without letting the other one know, and at the same time he takes good care that all the other people present should see he's jeering. Don't you see?"

"I don't see," said my mother.

"I've been with Dalibor at a dinner party," said the Professor, "when the host was trying to draw him out about van Gogh. Granted, one does not much like to have to sing for one's supper. Dalibor said, 'Do you mean van Gogh the Flemish sixteenth-century still-life painter of fowl and game?' Then, looking wide-eyed up and down the table during the sudden silence, he said, 'Well, how was I to know which one you meant?'

"But that's nothing. I'll tell you a truly outrageous performance of his. We are at an at home, at the Baron Borodyn's, and we are standing in this corner, Dalibor and I, and up comes this woman, rush rush rush, gush gush gush, and we are trapped. She starts on Dalibor: how she's always wanted to ask him did he have this wonderful gift from the cradle or did he hit on it later on in life? Dalibor says, 'Later in life, and by the merest chance.' He tells her it happened when he was seven years old, and sitting on a rock shelf in the Carpathian mountains, minding his father's goats, and, with a hazel rod, drawing idly in the soil at his feet. Along comes this stranger, stops behind him, looks at his tracings, and says, 'You are a God-gifted artist. And I, Picasso, shall see to it that you get the tuition you so richly deserve.' "

"This sounds perfectly crazy," my mother said.

"Not perfectly crazy, dear Madam. Just perfectly naughty. Because what Dalibor was dishing up was, of course, the old chestnut about how Giotto was discovered by Cimabue, but brought up to date."

"How very interesting," said my mother, her voice bleached with boredom. Then, in a tone of renewed vigor: "Who was she? The gushing woman, I mean. Anyone one knows?"

"Zavadil."

"Which of the Zavadils—the ones who are in distilling or the ones who are in spinning and weaving? Did she have an enormous bosom right down to her knees?"

"Exactly. Architecturally speaking, the balcony came right down to the columns of the edifice."

"That's the one," said my mother. "Handkerchiefs and tablecloths. They have their factories up north. In Hohenelbe."

"As far as I'm concerned you can leave Hohenelbe out of it," the Professor said. "The bosom was quite enough."

After a silence he went on. "The trouble with Dalibor is he has no love."

"How do you mean?" said my mother. "He never pays court to a woman, that's true. He's never been known to be keen on anyone. But then, for all you know, he may have someone tucked away in Vienna. Doing it on the cheap—milliner's apprentice, that kind of creature. Called Mitzi. They're always called Mitzi."

"I wasn't referring to that," he said. "Not that kind of love. I meant that he can't be bothered, Mitzi or otherwise."

"Selfish, you mean?"

"No," said the Professor. "That's not what I meant, either. Because if he were egotistical he'd be in love with himself, and that wouldn't be so bad, would it? The trouble with Dalibor is that he doesn't even love himself. If you ask me, that's fatal."

"This is getting too high for me," my mother said. "And too deep." Then, giving me an angry glance, she said, "Edith, do stop lounging. Sit up straight." Whenever she was feeling at a disadvantage, my mother would turn on me in this fashion, but I did not resent it on this occasion. I had found the Professor's conversation rewarding, even if it made me share my mother's bewilderment about Dalibor. My mother never understood. I did, but later.

I RAN into Dalibor the very next day, on a bright, windstill, frosty afternoon on the Graben. He was standing motionless in front of Lippert's, contemplating one of their display windows with brooding stubbornness. He seemed completely unaware of his surroundings. I knew that the chef Karasek, who was probably now in his kitchen at the rear of Lippert's devoting himself to the care of someone's double-strength consommé, was a Sunday painter, and that my grandmother had once prevailed upon Professor Wieland to look at Karasek's pictures, and that the Professor had declared that the chef had "a true gift for the rhythm of pattern-making," evolved from his habitual "painting" with aspic and mayonnaise. This had been kind of the Professor. It occurred to me now that Dalibor would never have been willing to be party to such a charade.

Dalibor, on this day, was not wearing the opulent, beaver-lined, Astrakhan-collared coat one might have expected but a dark-blue topcoat with a narrow velvet collar: sleek, modest, sober. It went perfectly with his habit of standing apart from the crowd, here on the Graben or in a corner at parties.

"Dalibor," I said. "I was just thinking of you."

"Irresistibly?"

I said, "Irresistibly."

"This is so sudden."

"It isn't. Because only yesterday we were discussing you. I couldn't resist telling Professor Wieland that you were doing the Cardinal Archbishop. Because I wanted to see him turn green with envy."

"And did he?"

"Oh, quite."

"Grass green or bile green?"

"Bile green."

"It's odd how impressed you are," he said. "To me it's just work. One head, one hand. If it's both hands, I charge more." And when I looked at him doubtingly, he added, "But now I'm going to do something really worthwhile. Out of the ordinary. May I walk along with you? Because it's getting cold standing about?"

We started toward the Gunpowder Tower, and he said, "I'll explain. A brother. A brother and a sister. In their sixties. He two years older than she is. Living in the sticks in Moravia—small castle, fields growing mainly cucumbers, the mean, nobbly ones, for pickling. Now, when he was ten and she was eight, they had their portraits painted, half-bust—he holding a lemon, she holding an orange. Now, fifty years later, they want to be done again, half-bust: he holding a lemon, she holding an orange. I'll do them in oils, trying to hit them off in the same style as before. That's what I call 'rewarding.' "

I did not reply.

He said, "You have even stopped looking at me. The story makes you feel shivery, doesn't it?"

"Rather, but I don't know why," I said.

"I'll tell you why. Because you've guessed that, needless to say, neither of them ever got married. Never moved away from their place. Didn't want to."

"Ghastly," I said. "It makes you think."

"You are wrong. Portrait painters never think. They paint."

I gave him a glance and looked away.

He said, "It reminds me of something else. Something the same, though different. Quite aboveboard this time, no incest. Listen. Friends of mine in Paris, they have this picture. Small thing, like this and like this," and he sketched the size with the fingers of both hands spread wide. "Eighteenth-century, pure Louis Quinze. A harbor scene, sort of Neapolitan fanciful. Men fumbling with boats and nets, sliver of sea, rocks, that kind of stuff. Bright sun, hot-looking aerial perspective, the figures bending or stretching, all stock-in-trade but very slick.

"Next to this picture, another picture. Same size, same place, same harbor, same figures doing their stuff. But sea in turmoil, sky stormy, gloom and menace. Now, how do you like that?"

"Wonderful," I said. "Who did it?"

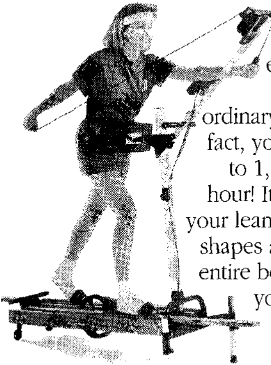
"No one you've ever heard of. St. Croix de Marseille, a follower of Joseph Vernet, who was the best seascape painter in France at that time. The odd thing is, these friends of mine, they had the sunny picture for ages. And picked up the stormy one, oh, about ten years after the other. At an auction."

I said, "I suppose you go a lot to Paris."

"I don't. I don't like Paris. And I don't like the French. This *politesse française* gets on my nerves. Even when they are excessively nasty, they are excessively polite. These friends of mine aren't French, by the way. They're from the Burgenland, the same as I—half Bohemian, half Hungarian, half Austrian, the same as I. I'd never go to Paris if it weren't for them."

We had by now reached Joseph's Square. Halting in front of the military barracks, and taking off his hat as a sign that he now intended to depart, Dalibor added, "The French are such formal people. It's a wonder they ever manage to make children." I looked away, embarrassed, and when I saw the soldiers standing guard in the sentry boxes flanking the portal of the building, I felt still more flustered, although I had told myself that they could not possibly have heard us. I left him, without saying goodbye.

MRS. HAUSSMAN, although never outrageously, absurdly, extravagantly wrong, like, say, Countess Sternborn, had been found unacceptable to our inner circle because of her lack of dignity. And yet by the end of March that year, just two months after the reception that I had attended, she was startlingly and horribly given a sudden dignity: a face that no longer frowned or pouted, a walk that became ponderous and no longer flitting, and a voice that no longer screeched through



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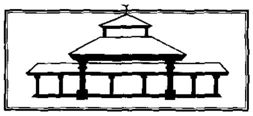

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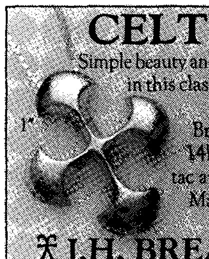

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the villa but had changed to a barely audible murmur. Her husband had died.

Who of us has not been marked, not once but many times, by a blue bruise? And watched this colorful reminder of a knock or fall change from its first blackish-violet blue to purple, then to a brownish-rust color, then to a faded green suffused with yellow, until the yellow, melting into cream, makes us at last forget the injury? Doctors call it "hematoma." How could it be, then, that Mr. Haussman, governor of the Union Bank, should have died of a hematoma, at the age of fifty-one? Standing in the corridor of the express train that was to take him from Prague to Vienna, for a conference, he had been thrown against the ashtray jutting out beneath a windowsill as the train was rounding a curve, and suffered a bruised thigh. He died a few days later, after a blood clot, travelling from the bruise, clogged his heart.

No less bizarre and unexpected was the news, at exactly the same time as Mr. Haussman's end, of the death of Dalibor, aged, the papers stated, thirty-eight. All the obituaries carried the same unlikely story. Dalibor had died in Paris, killed in the Champs-Élysées by a falling tree, during a storm, at five o'clock in the afternoon. All I could think of was our talk while walking down the Graben on that sunny, frosty afternoon, when he had made me feel ill at ease, first with the orange-and-lemon story, and then with his remarks expressing his dislike of the French.

It was to be expected that, in discussing the almost simultaneous deaths of Haussman and Dalibor, everyone would speak of "tragic and inexorable fate," and go so far as to link the two victims in that phrase. And yet a bare two months later, after the Haussman family had vacated the villa on the Weinberge, voices were heard saying that in Mr. Haussman's case, at least, fate had not been tragic but benign—a remark connected with the news that Director Glauber, who had been Mr. Haussman's right-hand man at the bank, had been committed to prison for serious fiscal improprieties, and had hanged himself there.

When, on an afternoon in early April, Professor Wieland again called on us, he did succeed in laying his admiration at my grandmother's feet, adding, "At your tiny feet, Madam," and being rewarded with one of my grandmother's rare smiles. Emma, without being bidden, carried in a tray with the apricot brandy to which he was partial, and he told her that she had guessed his "keenest hidden desires"—praise she received impassively, although she was perhaps not feeling unmoved.

My mother was in her room, in her *mille-fleurs* peignoir, filing her nails, when I came in to tell her that Professor Wieland was in the drawing room.

"I've already told Emma that I'm not at home," she said. "I've still got half an hour before I have to go out—it's a late-afternoon do—but Mama can carry on without me. God knows, I've always been for the highest things in life—haute-couture clothes and Hungarian counts and the rest—and I've got quite enough on my mind without sitting down with him and getting one of his lectures. That last time he was here, with all that talk about St. Peter's in Rome, that was enough to make you hit the ceiling."

"I liked it," I said. The Professor had explained how St. Peter's, as originally designed by Michelangelo, had been crippled by additions tacked on to the façade by a succession of lesser architects.

"And I can tell you this about St. Peter's," said my mother, "now that we are alone. When I went there, two years ago, and was climbing those never-ending inside stairs up to the dome, the guide put his hands on my bosom, from behind. He said he had to steady me. If he does that with me, at my age, where would he put his hands with a young girl? You ask the Professor. From me. When you go in. *And remember I'm* not at home."

As I returned to the drawing room the Professor was saying, "No, dear Madam. Haussman did have a sad fate, granted. But with Dalibor it was much worse. With Dalibor it was destiny—No, please, let me finish. You've only read the papers and what the papers said was true and wasn't true."

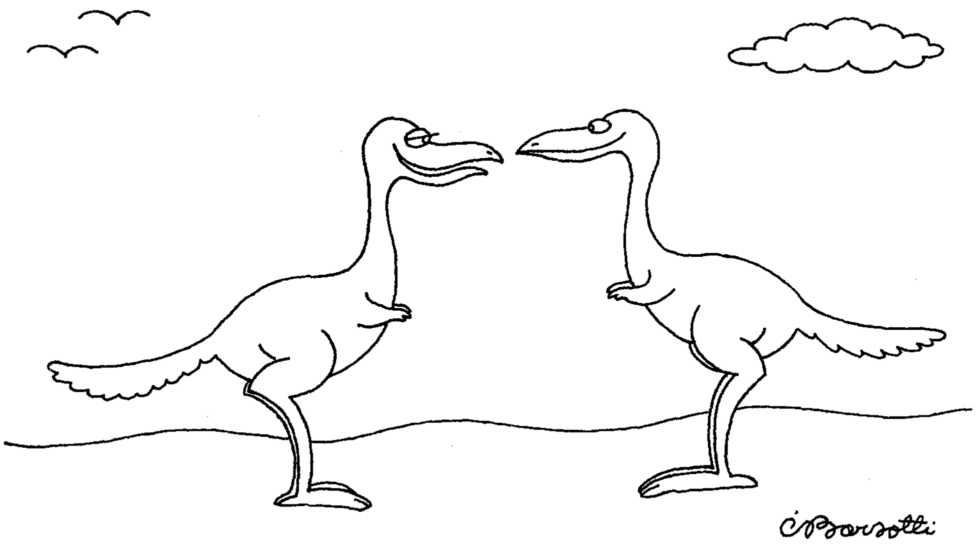
I thought, True and not true, why can't he make up his mind? He really can make you hit the ceiling. My face must have betrayed me, for my grandmother gave me a reproving look.

"No, please," he repeated, and I realized that he couldn't leave Dalibor alone, even in death, because he could not forgive his having captured the Cardinal Archbishop.

He said, "It's come to me through a grapevine that starts with those friends of his in Paris. But the story doesn't start in Paris; it starts in Zurich. It starts with Dalibor, who wants to get a break from his hard work in Prague and so he goes to Zurich. In Zurich—he must have felt pretty low—he goes to a fortune-teller. I can understand this. I do not find it silly. That's where his naughtiness comes in. I mentioned it once before, to madam your daughter. And to Miss Edith here."

"Yes, you did," I said.

"As I was saying, he likes to flirt with the irrational. Or maybe he thinks of it as just an entertainment, his kind of entertainment. Pretending he takes the fortune-teller seriously, while he's jeering at her. But she turns the tables on him. She asks him point blank how soon will



"God, you're hot-blooded!"

he be going to Paris. He says he isn't going to Paris, hasn't been there for ages, and doesn't intend to go.

"She doesn't stop. 'But I *see* you going to Paris. You must go to Paris! The event of the greatest magnitude in your life is waiting for you in Paris.'

"Now, these friends of his from his own homeland, Burgenland or somewhere, are in Paris, and he thinks, Why not? I'll look them up. When he told them that he had decided to visit them because of this fortune-teller rigmarole, they didn't know what to make of it. They even suspected it was one of those stories of his he liked to make up. His friends said, afterward, that he wasn't his usual self. He was morose and restless. They put it down to overwork—artists are moody, that kind of thing.

"He couldn't stay at home, they said. Kept going out and about, wandering, not knowing where he wanted to go.

"On that day, about five in the afternoon, he is on the Champs-Élysées. The storm brews up. At that time, there were people all around him, hundreds of them, milling about. It hadn't started to rain yet, but the wind came up all at once. The tree didn't crash—it couldn't. Such an enormous tree doesn't keel over in a flash.

"You could see it swaying and bending. You could hear it sighing, groaning, grinding. And Dalibor was standing quite far away from it. Everybody—but *everybody* who witnessed it, they were unanimous about it—said they all knew what was coming and ran away from it. There was plenty of time. No one else got so much as a scratch. And in the scramble, Dalibor walks up slowly to the tree, stands under it, and waits to be killed. Fulfilling his destiny."

"Irresistibly," I said.

They both turned their heads to me, astonished and reproachful. Astonished that I was there, reproachful because I had spoken. They had both forgotten my presence.

The Professor said slowly, "Yes, Miss Edith is right. Irresistibly."

He was not looking at me, though, but at my grandmother, and she was looking at him, each in a fashion that wholly excluded me. He said, "Destiny is what we make ourselves. Because our destiny is always irresistible to us." Her lips were half parted, and she bore that unfathomable expression of haughty, triumphant satisfaction that I recognized, at last, from her portrait. ♦

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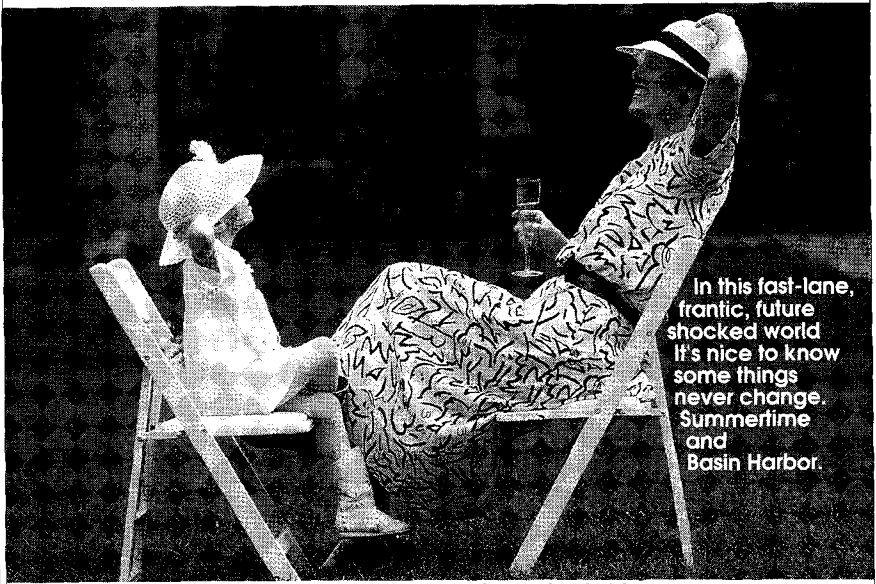

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THE CRITICS

BOOKS

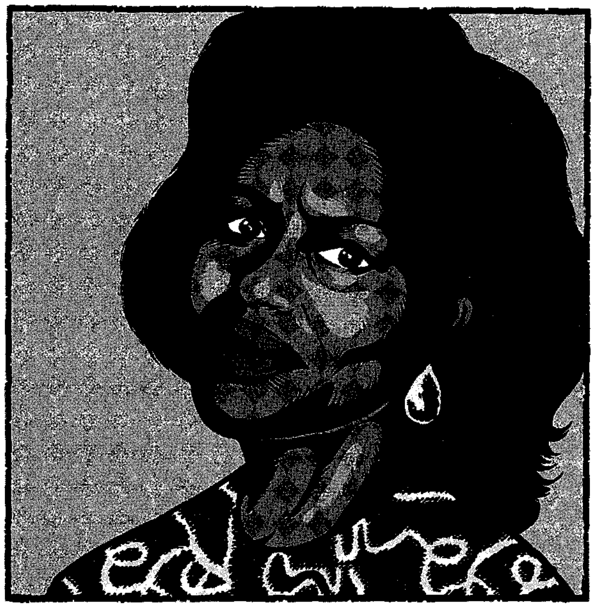
THE SURREAL ANITA HILL

BY JANE MAYER AND JILL ABRAMSON

NINETEEN months have passed since Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas exchanged their televised charges and denials in what became one of the most politically and sexually polarized confrontations in recent history, and still the American public is divided about whether a justice now sitting on the country's highest court lied to get the job. The extraordinary showdown between the judge and his accuser has already affected politics on almost every level, from the personal to the Presidential; but the mystery of who really was telling the truth has endured. So it is a matter of national interest that a man named David Brock has come forward with a book that purports to settle the question.

With a tone of authority and thirty-five pages of footnotes, his book, "The Real Anita Hill: The Untold Story" (Free Press; $24.95), is presented as a powerful work of investigative reporting. Published by a division of the reputable Macmillan publishing house, it is packaged as an unbiased, revisionist look at the explosive hearings, which the author claims to have approached as an agnostic, willing to go wherever the facts led him.

Having pored over hearing transcripts, F.B.I. interviews, previously unreleased affidavits, and the report of the special counsel assigned by the Senate to determine who leaked Hill's accusation to the media, Brock flatly accuses Anita Hill of fabricating her charge even though "she must have known that Clarence Thomas was not the guilty party in this case." At first, he proposes, Hill simply failed to correct a friend's false impression that Thomas was the man whom she had once accused of sexually harassing her. But later, Brock suggests, Hill actively embellished the story, with the help of overzealous Senate aides and of feminist law professors determined to score an ideological hit on a conservative nominee. At their extreme, her radical feminist mentors were indifferent to the truth, he concludes, because in their eyes "all men are seen as rapists . . . [so] it does not matter whether Hill proved her case against Thomas or not." The hearings, Brock warns darkly, were but one foray in a "broader ideological movement to redefine the legal and social relations between the sexes" now under way in this country.



An uncritical acceptance of David Brock's new book does a serious disservice to history.

MARK ZINGARELLI

In the course of making his case, Brock transforms the prim former Reagan Administration official, who is now a tenured professor of commercial law at the University of Oklahoma, into an emotionally unstable, "full-fledged campus radical" with a long list of political and personal reasons for wanting to do Clarence Thomas in. And that's not all. According to an anonymous source quoted by Brock, she seems to enjoy watching pornographic films and making lunchtime chitchat about "the size of men's penises" and "firm butts," and is "obsessed with oral sex."

Unsurprisingly, "The Real Anita Hill" has been heralded as the long-suppressed truth by prominent conservatives, among them Rush Limbaugh, Thomas Sowell, and George F. Will—who devoted his *Newsweek* column to the book, declaring it "persuasive to minds not sealed by the caulking of ideology." But it has also, surprisingly, received respectful reviews from the *Times*, the Washington *Post*, and *Newsday*, where the historian David J. Garrow, whose biography of Martin Luther King, Jr., was awarded a Pulitzer Prize, called the book "highly plausible," and suggested that "in time [it] may well prove to be far closer to the mark than many present-day pundits would like to believe."

An essentially uncritical acceptance of the facts in a nonfiction book—as distinct from the author's interpretations of those facts—is a convention of book reviewing, and normally an unavoidable one. In the case of "The Real Anita Hill," this convention threatens to do a serious disservice to history. For more than a year, we have been researching a political history of the Thomas confirmation battle, interviewing many of the same people Brock has talked to, and many to whom, evidently, he hasn't. He is skilled at lining up facts to fit his agenda, and it's clear that a familiarity with the larger record, and a willingness to do independent reporting, is required in order fully to evaluate—and to correct—his account. So, before this important piece of American history is abandoned to the ideologues, a closer look should be taken at both Brock and his "Real Anita Hill."

The book's jacket describes Brock as "an investigative journalist." The term suggests—as does Brock's foreword—that he is a man without a bias. "Like most Americans," the first sentence of the foreword reads, "I tuned into the Thomas-Hill hearings with an open mind." But what is left vague to readers trying to evaluate the perspective he brings to the subject is his extensive bona fides in the conservative movement. He is not an unbiased journalist, as he represents himself; he is a polemicist who writes. Through early 1991, he was a fellow of the Heritage Foundation, the staunchly conservative Washington think tank that supplied both intellectual energy and personnel to the Reagan revolution. His first "investigative" work on Professor Hill, a long article describing her as "a bit nutty, and a bit slutty" (the mudslinging language has been cleaned up for this more high-toned effort), appeared in March of 1992 in the lively and tendentiously conservative journal of opinion *The American Spectator*—a publication funded by several conservative foundations, one of which, the Bradley Foundation, donated a hundred thousand dollars last year partly to pay for "investigative" pieces like Brock's. Both the Bradley Foundation and the equally conservative John M. Olin Foundation have also helped to bankroll this book—as Brock acknowledges in an author's note. But the note, though it suggests full disclosure, fails to mention that the Olin Foundation is headed by William Simon, who served as finance chair of the Citizens' Committee to Confirm Clarence Thomas.

Of course, the fact that an author has a strong ideological predisposition is not an automatic indication that what he writes will be untrue or without merit. Much of the best nonfiction has come from impassioned, opinionated partisans. What is so troubling about Brock is that he pretends to be neutral when he is not. He does a skillful job of identifying numerous inconsistencies in the public and private record of the Hill-Thomas dispute, highlighting contradictions and questioning motives. But when it suits his agenda he will take a small inconsistency, read into it a major and unproved thesis, and, with each subsequent reference, treat his own speculation increasingly as accepted fact, as if repetition made it so. The technique will be recognizable to anyone who has watched a slick trial lawyer. But, unlike a court of law, the book provides no opportunity to face the accuser, since much of Brock's most damning material is in the form of quotes from anonymous sources. Nor is there any representation for the accused. Had Brock been interested in balance, he might have applied his "investigative journalism" to Justice Thomas as well. Instead, he gives Thomas a totally clean bill of health at the outset, declaring, without qualification, that "nothing was discovered to contradict his sworn testimony." One wonders how hard he looked.

Brock's central thesis is that Hill left the false impression, in a telephone conversation with a girlfriend, that Thomas had harassed her, and, for unknown reasons, failed subsequently to clear up the misunderstanding. Instead, Hill decided to stick with the misrepresentation, to repeat it to the F.B.I., to fly to Washington so that she could repeat it publicly in front of a national television audience (and her assembled family), and then to subject herself and the detailed story she was fabricating to three days of intense grilling by the members of the Senate Judiciary Committee—all under threat of perjury.

The proof offered for this extraordinary case of mistaken identity is that the girlfriend in question, Susan Hoerchner, who was a Yale Law School classmate of Hill's and is now a workers' compensation judge in Norwalk, California, told authorities that she recalled that it was in the spring of 1981 that Hill had first mentioned being harassed—and the spring of 1981 was several months before Hill first started working for Thomas, at the Department of Education. Therefore, Brock concludes, Hill must have been referring to an *earlier* harasser at an *earlier* job, whom Hoerchner later confused with Thomas.

The possibility that when Hoerchner

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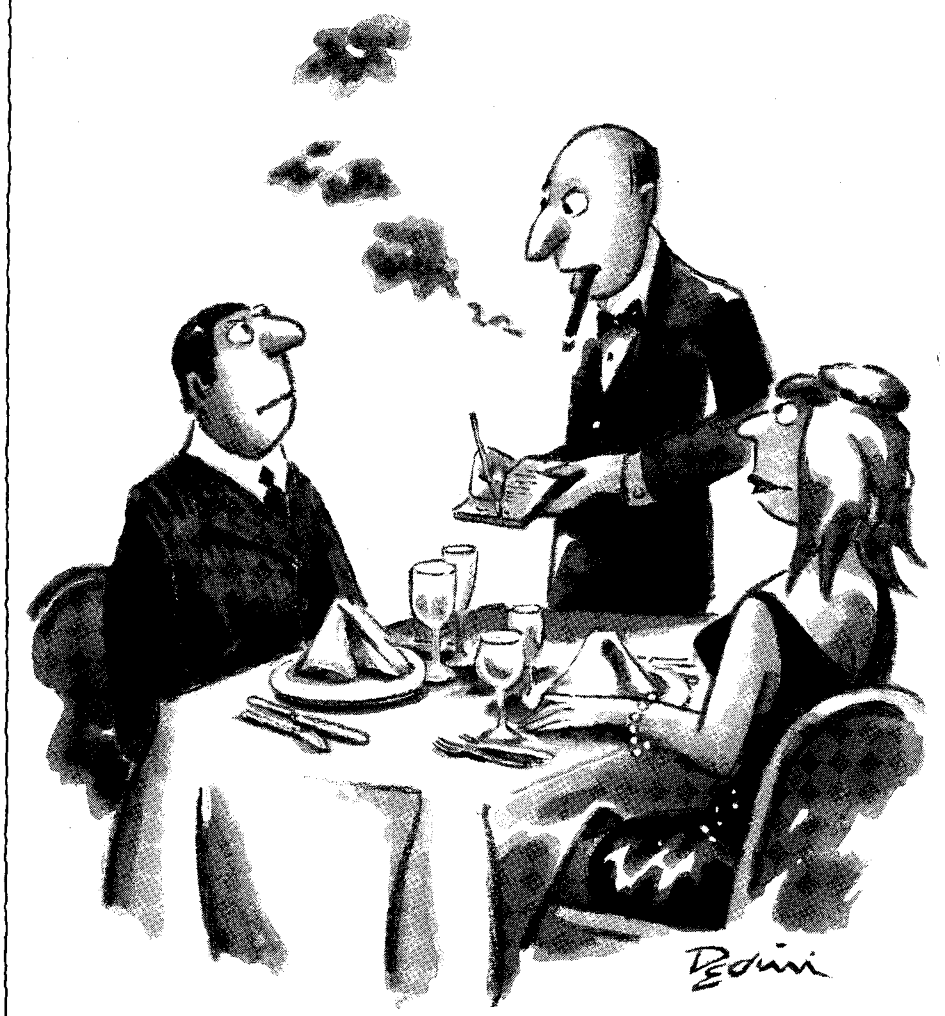

"If you wanted the no-smoking section, you should have said so."

was recalling a conversation that had taken place a decade earlier she got the date of the conversation wrong by a few months is not explored. Brock did not interview Hoerchner or her attorney, Ron Allen; if he had, he would have learned that when she was first contacted and interviewed by the F.B.I. Hoerchner characterized the date of her phone conversation as "a wild guess," and was therefore reluctant to supply it. In her later sworn testimony, she said three times that she simply could not pin down the date of the conversation with any certainty—a statement that Brock interprets as reflecting a belated realization that the pieces of her story weren't adding up. What she was certain about, however, and what she swore to under oath, in testimony not included in this book, was that Hill "had gone to work for Clarence Thomas in the Department of Education before she mentioned any problems with harassment."

On the fragile foundation of a shaky date a mighty fortress of intrigue is built. The plot gets so much more convoluted before Brock's version of Anita Hill's "untold story" is over that the book produces a kind of absurdist effect, giving us more the surreal Anita Hill than the real one. Probably the most egregious, and certainly the most sensational, of the book's distortions serve to reconstruct Hill's image into that of a wanton sexual tease, coming on to her students in bizarre ways and engaging in kinky sexual conversations—allegations that are useful to Brock as a way of explaining how Hill was able to fabricate the details of her charge against Thomas. For the most part, Brock bases these ad feminam attacks on anonymous sources, thereby making them impossible to evaluate; but an examination of one of the few instances in which sources are named does not inspire faith in his reportorial methods.

He writes that when Hill was teaching

law at Oral Roberts University, in Tulsa, she once returned several students' papers to them with what appeared to be a dozen or so pubic hairs sprinkled through the pages. The pubic-hair motif, of course, echoes Hill's testimony that Thomas once picked up a Coke can in her presence and asked, inexplicably, "Who has put pubic hair on my Coke?" The term-paper story is attributed to a former law student, now a Tulsa attorney, named Lawrence Shiles. Brock writes that, despite qualms in the Justice Department, "Shiles took it upon himself to swear out an affidavit" about the pubic hairs, which "he filed with the Judiciary Committee under no pressure from the divided Thomas camp in Washington." A corroborative witness, named Jeff Londoff, is also mentioned in the affidavit. Brock says that Londoff, "while he could not be sure of their source . . . corroborated the affidavit and said virtually the same things about the hairs in an interview: 'They were short, coarse, and curly.' "

But in a recent interview Londoff, who is now an attorney in St. Louis, told us a different story: "The whole thing was just a joke—how the hell would anyone know whether it was pubic hair or not? The lady's black, you know; she's got kinky hair. Or it could have come from an assistant, too. But some Senate aide kept faxing me these affidavits trying to get me to sign them saying it was pubic hair. They must have called me ten or twelve times. They wanted to put as much crap down on her as they could. I think they were looking for anything they could find, but the affidavit was so one-sided I refused to sign." This is from a source Brock describes as providing corroboration.

As for Shiles, Londoff, who considers himself a good friend, said of him, "You have to understand, Larry has different views about black and white [people]. He's a great guy, but he's from down South, if you know what I mean." Moreover, "Larry had a problem with Professor Hill for a number of reasons—he didn't do too well in her class." And Brock's assertion that Shiles came forward on his own is disputed by Shiles himself. "I was hunting with my son way up in Rifle, Colorado, when my wife called at midnight on a Saturday night at the motel where we were staying. She said someone from Hank Brown's office"—Brown is the Colorado Republican senator and serves on the Judiciary Committee—"was trying to reach me," Shiles told us. After eliciting the pubic-hair story, the staffer searched through the Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory for the nearest law firm and arranged for Shiles to have an affidavit notarized there on Sunday morning so that it could be used in the hearings.

These are not insignificant differences. By exposing Brock's eagerness to distort a puerile student joke into a corroborated instance of seriously strange behavior, they fundamentally undermine his characterization of Anita Hill. The Republican members of the Judiciary Committee considered Shiles' affidavit too risky to use. In the absence of any corroboration—despite strenuous efforts to get Londoff to confirm the story—they discounted it. Their judgment is evidently not shared by Brock.

Brock's thesis that Hill accused the wrong man rests on his assumption that she must have had someone else in mind when she first discussed the problem with Susan Hoerchner. So he posits that Hill made up an earlier harassment experience, and he endows her with a motive for doing so: he suggests that she invented such an experience in order to cover up her failure to thrive at Wald, Harkrader & Ross, a Washington law firm, now defunct, that she went to work for, as a junior associate, after Yale. Brock uses this alleged incident to establish that Hill had a "proclivity to use harassment . . . as an excuse for her personal and professional problems," and suggests that she repeated this behavior when she charged Thomas. Brock's argument requires him to prove that Hill was, in fact, failing at the law firm, and was thus in need of a cover story. He stakes quite a lot on this notion, asserting at one point that "the most critical misrepresentation" Hill made during the hearings was her denial that she had been asked to leave the law firm.

That assertion, unlike many in the book, at least has a named source: a former Wald, Harkrader partner named John Burke. Burke states, in an affidavit submitted to the Judiciary Committee, that Hill was indeed in trouble at the firm, and that he told her it would be in her best interests to seek employment elsewhere. What Brock does not mention is that, according to three partners who have searched the firm's records—Robert Wald, C. Coleman Bird, and

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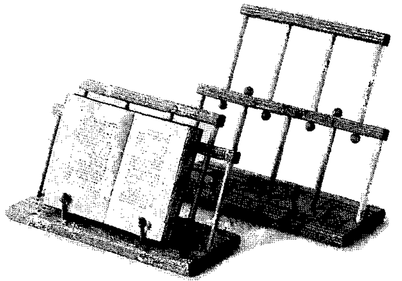

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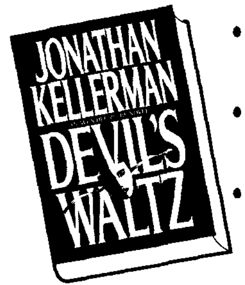

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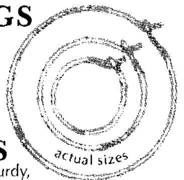

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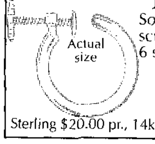

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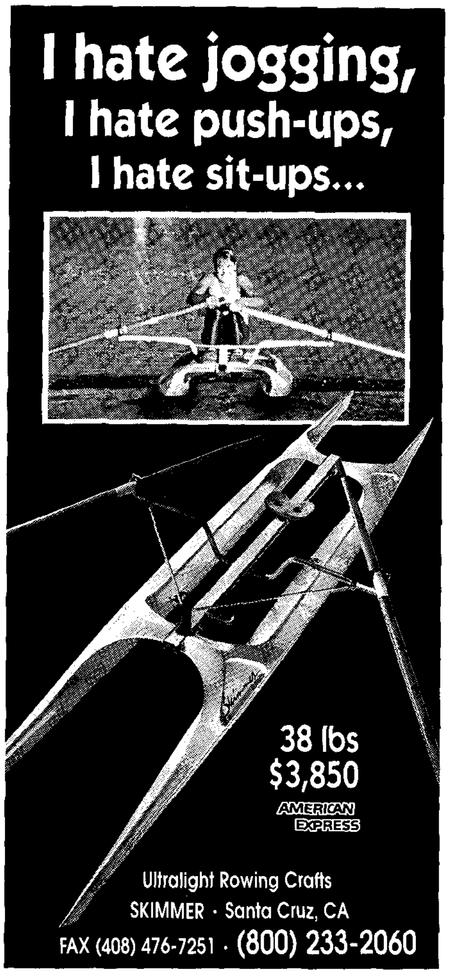

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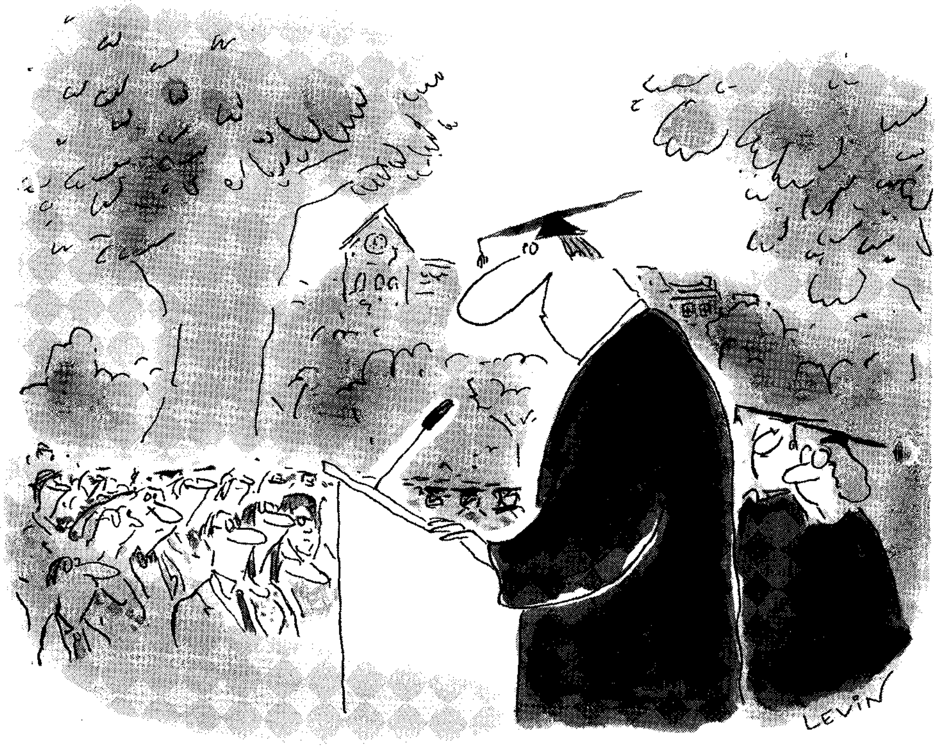
Donald Green—they give no indication that Hill ever worked on any legal matter with John Burke. This makes it highly unlikely that he would have had any role in evaluating Hill's work, much less that he would have taken it upon himself to ask her to leave the firm. Moreover, these two partners say that Hill's associate evaluations do not indicate unsatisfactory work. Interestingly, the records do show that Burke worked with another black female associate, in the same class at the firm as Hill, and that this associate was performing so unsatisfactorily that she was asked to leave the firm. Brock fails to present readers with the embarrassing possibility that Burke had in mind the wrong black female associate. Nor does he consider how unlikely it would have been for the firm to dismiss *both* of its first-year black female associates. Burke is a respected member of the bar, and a liberal with no ideological axe to grind, but there is another reason to question his memory: at the time he submitted his affidavit about Hill, Burke called Jeffrey Liss, another former partner, who he thought was present during his talk with Hill, for confirmation. Liss says that he told Burke he had no memory of it.

Brock stretches this thin story line even further: he suggests a deliberate coverup on the part of those who dispute the contention that Hill was asked to leave, including the firm's founder, Robert Wald, who is a well-known liberal lawyer in Washington. To prove that Wald is part of a liberal conspiracy, Brock discloses triumphantly that Wald's wife, Patricia, a prominent federal judge (she was on President Clinton's short list for Attorney General), "was close to" Anita Hill's sympathizer Senator Paul Simon. But, alas for conspiracy buffs, both Senator Simon and Judge Wald agree that they have never met.

By page 297, Brock's speculation has hardened into fact, and he is referring to Thomas as "the man who had saved [Hill] from the indignity of being fired at Wald, Harkrader." Without any evidence that Hill ever filed a complaint or accused anyone other than Clarence Thomas of sexual harassment, Brock has turned a harassment episode which only he knows about, designed to cover a failure no one can prove, into a "pattern of complaints about harassment" on Hill's part, which he then uses to explain her charges against Thomas.

Hill's alleged invention could not have succeeded, in Brock's account, without the support of a conspiracy of anti-Thomas partisans. By far the most successful section of Brock's book is its discussion of the behind-the-scenes political pressure that forced Hill to come forward. The reason the reporting is so much more thorough



"Graduates, faculty, parents, creditors . . ."

here than elsewhere may be that it is largely based on the special counsel's report on the leak—a document that was itself based on hundreds of interviews. But even with all this assistance, Brock manages to wring an unbalanced conclusion from the facts. He descries the existence of a "Shadow Senate," which he describes as a "loose coalition of special-interest lobby groups, zealous Senate staffers, and a scandal-hungry press corps . . . who organized . . . the opposition to conservative judicial nominees." This nexus is unquestionably important. But Brock scarcely mentions its counterpart, the well-funded conservative coalition, backed in part by the same foundations that have supported his book, which worked hand in glove with the Bush White House in a campaign to generate support for Judge Thomas. In any event, the issue of who leaked Hill's testimony does not bear on the question of whether the substance of that testimony was fabricated.

Among Brock's more extraordinary theories is that all of Hill's four corroborating witnesses were either confused or lying. After Hoerchner, he takes them on one by one. When he is done, he declares that Hill's case was "uncorroborated and unsupported by any co-worker, or anyone else." But interviews that we conducted with all four corroborating witnesses (none of whom appear to have been interviewed by Brock) and a fair reading of the hearing transcripts leave no doubt that Hill confided both the nature and the source of her harassment problem to a number of people at the time it was happening. And Brock unwisely and incorrectly assumes that the four people who testified to this constitute the whole universe of people she told.

Brock levels one of his nastiest attacks against Angela Wright, a woman who worked under Thomas at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission until he fired her. Wright spent the weekend of the hearings in her lawyer's office in Washington and in an Arlington, Virginia, motel room, waiting to testify that Thomas had also made sexually inappropriate comments to her at work, asking her breast size at one point, and admiring the hair on her legs at another. She is obviously in a position to counter Brock's argument that no other women have ever had similar complaints about Thomas. In what is apparently an effort to undermine Wright's credibility, Brock stresses that

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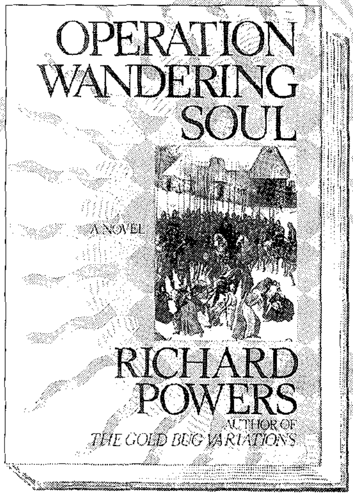

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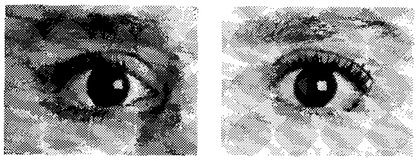

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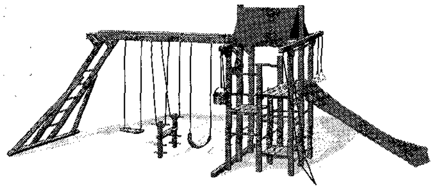

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she refused to submit to an F.B.I. interview. But according to her attorney James G. Middlebrooks, Wright was interviewed by two F.B.I. agents, Linda McKetney and Leslie Fairbairn, of the agency's Washington Metropolitan Field Office, between 1:30 and 3 P.M. on Saturday, October 12th. Brock also claims that the statement Wright submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee was not sworn, and he upbraids National Public Radio's legal-affairs correspondent, Nina Totenberg, for stating otherwise in a speech at Stanford. Totenberg and the rest of the media were, in his view, irresponsible in giving Wright any coverage at all, since, he argues, "ordinarily, one would not credit such unsworn statements as Wright's by publicizing them further." But Wright's statement was sworn. She signed a legal affidavit under oath that her statement was true and accurate, thus giving it the same legal status as sworn testimony before the Judiciary Committee. According to Wright, Brock never attempted to get in touch with her to ask about this or about anything else.

All nonfiction books contain errors, but this book is unusual in the extent to which its key arguments are based on them. For example, in confronting the problem that Hill passed a polygraph test Brock suggests that Paul Minor, the man who conducted it, was inexperienced, quoting a competitor of Minor's as saying, "I don't think he's run that many tests." But Minor was a full-time polygraph examiner for the federal government from 1972 until 1987, when he retired as chief of the F.B.I.'s polygraph division. When Brock raises the issue of whether Senators Howard Metzenbaum and Paul Simon, both Democratic members of the Judiciary Committee, had something to hide from the special counsel investigating the leak, he asserts that they both "refused to be interviewed" by the special counsel. But each was interviewed for over an hour. Brock asserts, no fewer than four times, that the feminist law professor Catharine MacKinnon (whose name he misspells) "advised Anita Hill before she testified"—assertions that appear to be an effort to buttress the claim that radical feminists helped Hill to concoct her story. But MacKinnon adamantly denies that she advised Hill, either directly or indirectly, and so do Hill's lawyers. And, to give just one more example, in an attempt to provide Hill with a motive for coöperating with Senate aides who were out to get Thomas, Brock quotes two former employees of Thomas's as saying that Hill and James Brudney—the aide to Metzenbaum whom Brock accuses of leaking Hill's allegations to the media—were close friends. The friendship, one of these sources asserts, was in full bloom while Hill worked at the E.E.O.C. Brock omits from the account, however, that the same source told Senate investigators that Brudney was working for the Senate at the time. But Brudney didn't work for the Senate until two years after Hill left Washington for Oklahoma, which raises questions about the source's reliability. Brock's other source on the friendship is quoted as saying that Hill often talked of "having spent the weekend at [Brudney's] apartment, in Foggy Bottom I think it was." According to a spokesman for Brudney, he only saw and spoke to Hill once during the entire time they were both in Washington, when he bumped into her on the street. And he has never lived in Foggy Bottom.

At a certain point, a knowledgeable reader begins to wonder how many of these errors are innocent and how many are deliberate distortions. Although Brock carefully distances himself from the Republicans on the Senate Judiciary Committee, and even suggests that their tactics were at times unfair to Hill, his version of history has many of the earmarks of the original smear campaign. If anything, it is less principled, since he bases so much of his reporting—particularly the uncorroborated and mostly anonymous allegations from Oklahoma about Hill's sexual peccadilloes—on material that the Republican members of the Senate Judiciary Committee had at their disposal during the hearings but considered beyond the pale.

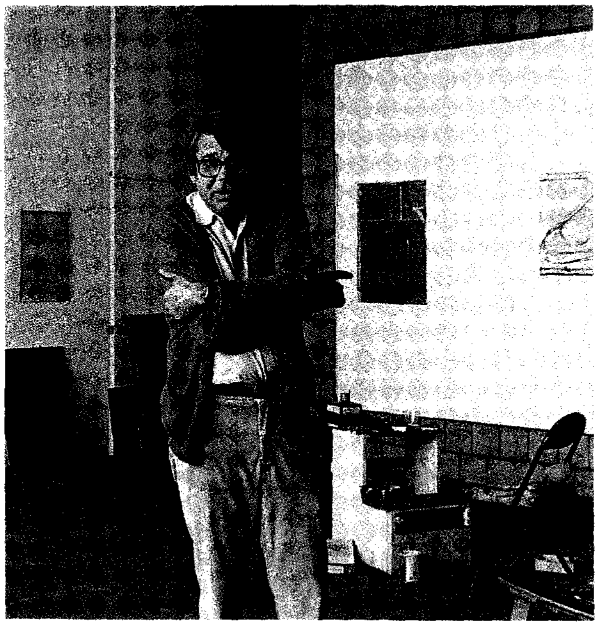
Given the fervor with which Brock and his funders have gone after Hill, what is most striking is how little they have found. Once the sources are evaluated and the contradictory evidence is considered, Brock's arguments evaporate into an amorphous cloud of ill will. It's understandable, and even laudable, that Thomas's supporters would want to clear his name from slander. And obviously, in order to do so, they must somehow deal with Hill. But then one might expect them to construct their case on the facts, rather than the other way around. ◆

THE ART WORLD

DIEBENKORN REDUX

BY ADAM GOPNIK

"LYRICAL painter dies," the *Times* announced when the California painter Richard Diebenkorn died, on March 30th, after a long illness. In one news-magazine obituary he was called "a poet of sunny spaciousness," and in another his "Ocean Park" pictures were described as "the most affectionately regarded series in modern American art." The obituaries were typical of the slightly backhanded compliments that Diebenkorn had been getting for most of his career. Americans don't want their painters to be affectionately regarded—we mostly like them tetchy and transcendental—and "sunny spaciousness" sounds more like something we ask of an apartment than of an abstract master. Even "lyrical painter" is one of those winking epithets—like "scrappy infielder," "hardworking comedian," or "sensitive art critic"—which are really code for "not so hot." Diebenkorn was always being relegated to the basement even as he was being praised to the skies.

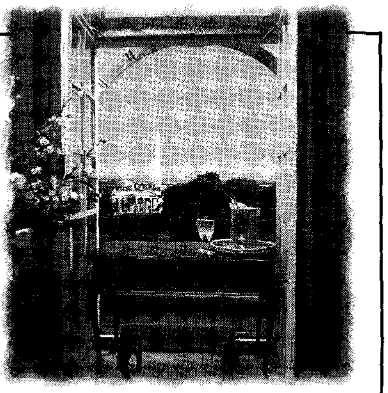


Richard Diebenkorn in his Venice Beach studio in 1982. The painter was both praised and ignored for the wrong reasons.

HANS NAMUTH

And yet Diebenkorn had been, in an unpretentious way, one of the key figures in a great transformation that took place in American art over the past quarter century: the rise of California from a provincial backwater to an artmaking capital equal to New York. It is a transformation like the one experienced by Venice and Florence at the end of the fifteenth century: as the tough metropolis succumbed to Mannerism, the softer city opened up to light, and what had been achieved by argument was restated as sensation. The line of West Coast artists who have made California light into a subject—a line that includes Robert Irwin, as the resident guru, and James Turrell, as the resident mystic, and extends to a whole roster of other artists, among them Larry Bell, John McCracken, and Maria Nordman—now seems as imposing as any in American art, and it is a line that begins with Richard Diebenkorn.

Almost from the beginning, though, Diebenkorn was identified with New Yorkers' one-dimensional conception of California culture. ("Kenneth Noland is a shark; Diebenkorn is a little goldfish," one New York critic wrote in the sixties. The phrase stung Diebenkorn.) And his best paintings, the "Ocean Park" series, were begun in the late sixties, when the ideological thuggery that has dominated New York art criticism ever since was just coming into being. Mannerism produces ideologues the way civil wars produce refugees: an art in which everything is held in quotation marks demands one gang of commentators to untangle its allusions and another gang of commentators to mock the first. Diebenkorn was patronized, or just ignored, by the ideological thugs of the left and encumbered with praise by the ideological thugs of the right. Of the two, the right did him



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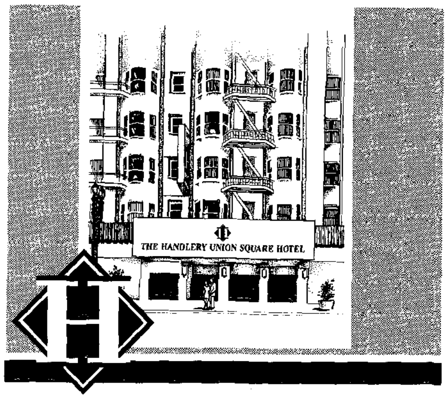

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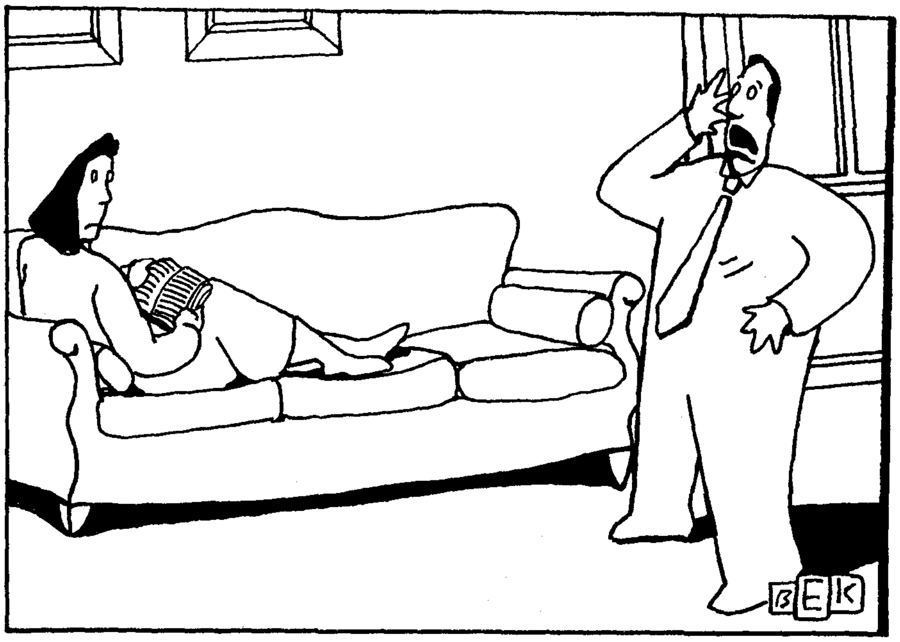

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more harm, because they made Diebenkorn seem like a much less intelligent painter than he really was. They admired his work for its absences, for all that it didn't include (explicit political or ironic content, the more obvious kinds of pop imagery), and thereby left an impression, which may be hard to erase, of Diebenkorn as a Malibu Matisse, cruising in a comfort zone of blue skies and beaches. Oddly, something very similar happened to Cézanne, who was, with Matisse, one of Diebenkorn's acknowledged masters: he, too, was taken up at the end of his life by reactionaries, who found in his work a comforting rustic, Provençal piety, and could not see what was far-reaching in it.

If "lyrical" means anything more precise than just "nice," Diebenkorn was in fact one of the least lyrical painters who have ever lived. There was nothing singing or unimpeded in his best paintings. His "Ocean Park" landscapes are a daily journal of second thoughts, half-spoken sentences, and reproachful self-corrections. What drew him to Matisse was not Matisse's finesse but his clumsiness—his edgy, black-outlined nerve. Diebenkorn was not a Francophile escapist but a connoisseur of the American vernacular. He loved George Herriman's "Krazy Kat," for instance, and the architecture of his best paintings owes something to Herriman's way of skipping in and out of opposite worlds, a bright landscape suddenly becoming a black square in the next panel, and to Herriman's little incidental, embroidered forms, the jumpy, ragged circles and squiggles scooting out of the geometry of the panels. Diebenkorn's art is never just pretty: it is one of the most quietly astringent commentaries we have on the emptiness and glare and charm and sadness of Southern California.

Diebenkorn was born in Oregon, in 1922, and served a long apprenticeship, coming up through the world of the West Coast art schools at a time when the necessities of commercial art sat side by side with a distant, hazy knowledge of avant-garde experiment. He was one of the last American painters who experienced Cézanne and Matisse as *news*. After moving to New Mexico, in 1949, Diebenkorn painted in a mostly abstract mode. Then, around 1955, he relocated to Berkeley, and became well known for his figure paintings; his brightly painted, faceless men and women isolated in sunny rooms combined bits of Hopper and Avery. For a while in the fifties, Diebenkorn's work (along with that of his Bay Area colleagues David Park and Elmer Bischoff) seemed like a safe alternative to the excesses and theoretical hobbyhorsing of New York abstraction, and he made a small, impeccable reputation for himself.

Then, in 1966, Diebenkorn saw Matisse's 1914 "Porte-Fenêtre à Collioure," the most concentrated "abstract" picture Matisse ever painted—four vertical panels of chalky color that manage to suggest a real world of perceived landscape—and discovered in it the possibility of a carpentered, absolutely geometrical, hard-angled painting that would evoke both a world and a mood. The experience of the "Porte-Fenêtre" might not have come to anything, though, if Diebenkorn hadn't moved from Berkeley to Santa Monica later that year. He went south to teach, and also because he was beginning to feel that he was, as one friend has put it, "losing his salt." The move was as momentous, in its smaller orbit, as Cézanne's move south from Paris back to Aix. The difference, though—and it was one of the things that saved Diebenkorn from becoming an empty, moderne pastoral painter—was that this was a move not from the metropolis to a childhood paradise but, rather, from a safe home to a summer rental: from the congenial, Chardonnay-and-olive-bread world of Northern California to the hard-edged, honky-tonk tawdriness of Santa Monica. What Diebenkorn found there was emptiness: long, uninterrupted planes of sea and air and beach and freeway—the familiar alarming California emptiness of Hockney, or, for that matter, of Raymond Chandler, now made oddly comforting by the intensity of Diebenkorn's regard for it. He didn't moralize about this familiar landscape of Los Angeles existentialism; instead, to him it was endlessly rewarding, worthy of a constant, sensuous, apprehensive fastidiousness. He brought the entire apparatus of modernist scrupulousness and self-conscious qualification to bear on the task of caressing a little plot of beach-blanket country. In the "Ocean Park" pictures, for all their seeming spaciousness and assurance, each area of ocean blue or its surrounding T-square of gray sand shows, just beneath the surface, all the ghosts of previous gestures. This isn't merely the scumbled, "built-up" surface of conventional painterliness but a more purposefully awkward spilling-over. Approach the surface of an "Ocean Park" painting, and the planes leak at the edges: small touches and squiggles and marks of stray red or indigo jump out of the geometric boundaries.

Diebenkorn's borrowing from Matisse was much analyzed by his academic admirers and was called a dependency by his critics. But in truth he took less from Matisse than it seemed—really, only the idea (though it's a big one) that bits and pieces of a field of vision could be reduced to a matrix of forms. Matisse was an inventor of sensations rather than a chronicler of them. His planes of ornament are precise and concentrated and decisive; it's the rhythmic overlay of all the parts that supplies the voluptuousness. In Diebenkorn, it's the small touches that are voluptuous, while the over-all design remains severe and chaste. Diebenkorn was really a Cézannist through and through—a painter whose work was built out of small, hesitant apprehensions rather than big, decorative scenery-shifting. Matisse gave him a format, but Cézanne gave him an ethic. It is Cézanne's views of L'Estaque, with their sandy foundations and their expanses of blue and their almost primitive geometric organization—little squares inside big blue rectangles—that are the real begetters of "Ocean Park."

The point about the "Porte-Fenêtre" is that Matisse did it only once, as an invention, even a sport—a singular response to a singular experience. For Diebenkorn, that precise geometrical order became, for good and for ill (but mostly for good), something like a formula—a personal prism of order through which all experience could pass. In this taste for a formula, Diebenkorn reached out not only to the Abstract Expressionists of the previous generation, with their insistence on an unchanging personal motif, but also to an earlier American taste for placing order before response—for taming an overload of sensation by treating it with a quasi-scientific rigor. Hedonism according to a blueprint—it's an old American ideal, and there are even certain Winslow Homer seascapes of Maine that, in their flat, nearly monochromatic neatness and unreal, geometric banding of waves and foam and sand, look, for all the differences in light, uncannily like Diebenkorn's arrangements.

DIEBENKORN was drawn to Cézanne, too, one suspects, because Cézanne, unique among the modern

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masters, was utterly *square.* Diebenkorn, the perfect representative of a culture without irony, was square, too, but he managed to be square without being corny, which is a nice way of remaining classic. This unbending, classical sincerity—a Cézannist quality—radiated from the man, and it was a trait that his friends most often admired and recalled.

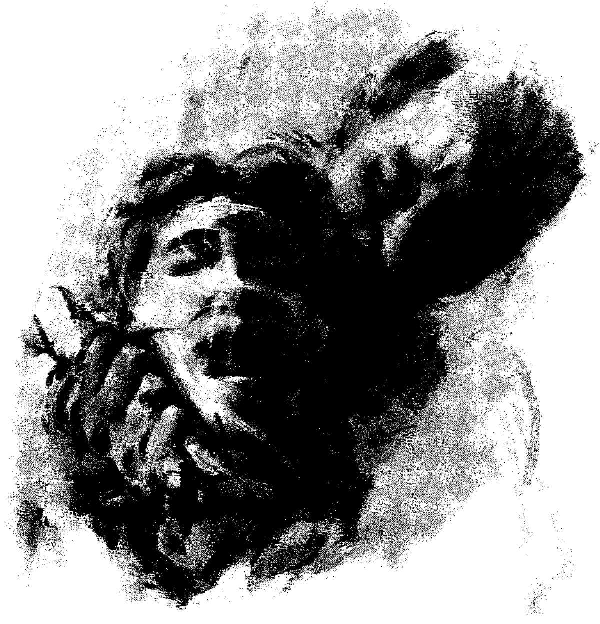
A few days after Diebenkorn's death, Wayne Thiebaud, his close friend and only peer among California painters, tried to define Diebenkorn's essential qualities. Diebenkorn, he said, had, above all, "an intelligence of hesitancy," and he added, "There's a systematic skepticism inherent in his paintings—they always seem complete, but never finished." Most of all, Thiebaud remembered Diebenkorn's doubts. "He loved the beautiful—that's there, this earthiness—but it always involved a juxtaposition of opposites," he said. "He talked a lot about crudeness. Visiting his studio in Venice, where he made the 'Ocean Park' series, was always lovely, but strange. It was a cinder-block house that he had built, with little pieces of the landscape all around—right angles of freeways and abutments, not at all pastoral. He took a long time looking before he started to work anywhere. He moved north again toward the end of his life, and his wife, Phyllis, wanted to plant flowers out front after they had been there for a month or two. Dick wouldn't let her. He had just begun to grasp what was there, and he didn't want to have to distill a new element, even a lovely one. Especially a lovely one.

"My visits to Dick's studio were always pleasing. He'd keep the pictures around for a long while, and then, finally, after a long silence, he'd ask me about them. I was hesitant to say anything. He created a kind of envelope of hesitancy around him. Finally, I'd work up the nerve to criticize one section of a picture. He'd sigh, and say, 'Yes, that's just the part that bothers me.' He always thought that painting was revision. There was a beautiful Indian miniature he kept in his studio, which I always admired. Once, when I was visiting him, I noticed that one tiny area in the miniature had suddenly changed, been made green. I looked at Dick. 'Yeah,' he said—he was a little embarrassed. 'I corrected it.' " ♦

THE CURRENT CINEMA

KILLING JOKE

BY ANTHONY LANE



Deadpan: Benoit Poelvoorde and victim in "Man Bites Dog."

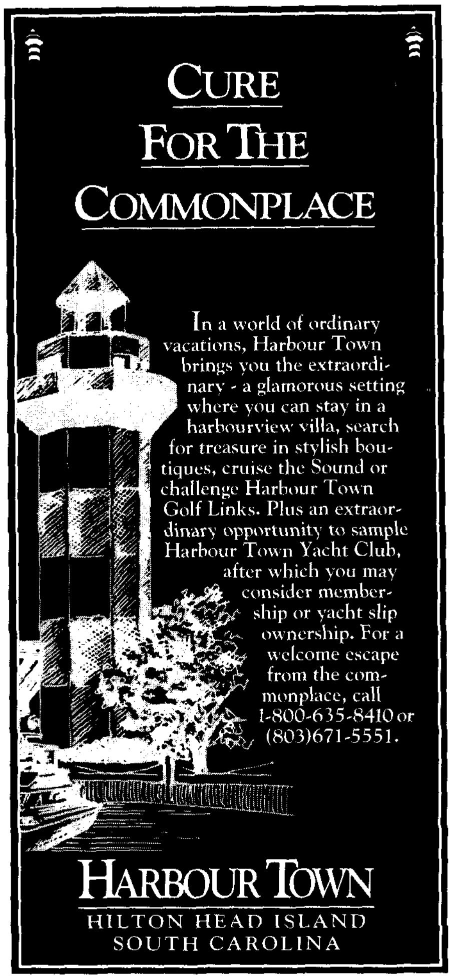
KRAWCZYK

THE Belgian film "Man Bites Dog," though full of hateful things, is a labor of love. It was conceived by three people: Rémy Belvaux, André Bonzel, and Benoit Poelvoorde. The first directed it, the second photographed it, and the third is the star; they also produced it, and each had a hand in the screenplay. All of them appear onscreen, using their real first names; it's part of the movie's continual trade-off between genuine and fake, which feels sneaky and underhanded, like a drug deal. "Man Bites Dog" takes the form of a mock documentary, in which Rémy and his crew follow Benoit around as he talks, eats, spends time with his family, and kills people. There is every kind of murder on show here: murder for money; murder plus rape; murder of close friends and total strangers, of young and old; murder for the hell of it and murder for the heaven of a good kill. Some deaths are edited into a ferocious barrage; others are lingered over, as if they were crafts that needed to be learned. The movie dares you to watch—or, if you can't watch, to listen, as Benoit asks the sound man to draw near and catch the breaking of a neck. It sounds like someone treading on a dry branch.

The film is shot in black-and-white, but don't expect "Manhattan"; there's no fine-tuning of gray on gray here—just the endless abrasion of high-contrast grit. You come away from the film smarting and exhausted. The first death we see, a strangling on a train, is deliberately shorn of slickness: it has the rough gasp and clumsiness of the railway killing in "The American Friend." Every now and then, a patch of beauty shows through, but only in the most unsuitable places: even as we see a body sprawled and violated on a bed, we can't help noticing the loveliness of the light behind, a holy blur of halation at the window.

It may seem perverse to defend the movie as it winds itself up to a new pitch of bad taste, but only at this level does it really work. "Man Bites Dog" is one big joke. Or, at any rate, it's making a big point: that cinema has given birth to a species of violence so alluring that it has fallen in love with its own creation. This is nothing new, but you have to admire Belvaux and the others for pushing the argument to its logical brink; there's an eccentric, Swiftian courage in seeing how far you can go, and in risking the disgust of your audience on the way. And the movie gets going so quickly that you never have a chance to question the main conceit; it seems as natural to tail a psychopath as it did to follow a heavy-metal band in "This Is Spinal Tap," and in neither instance is there any danger of the game's being given away.

You might call this a feel-bad movie:



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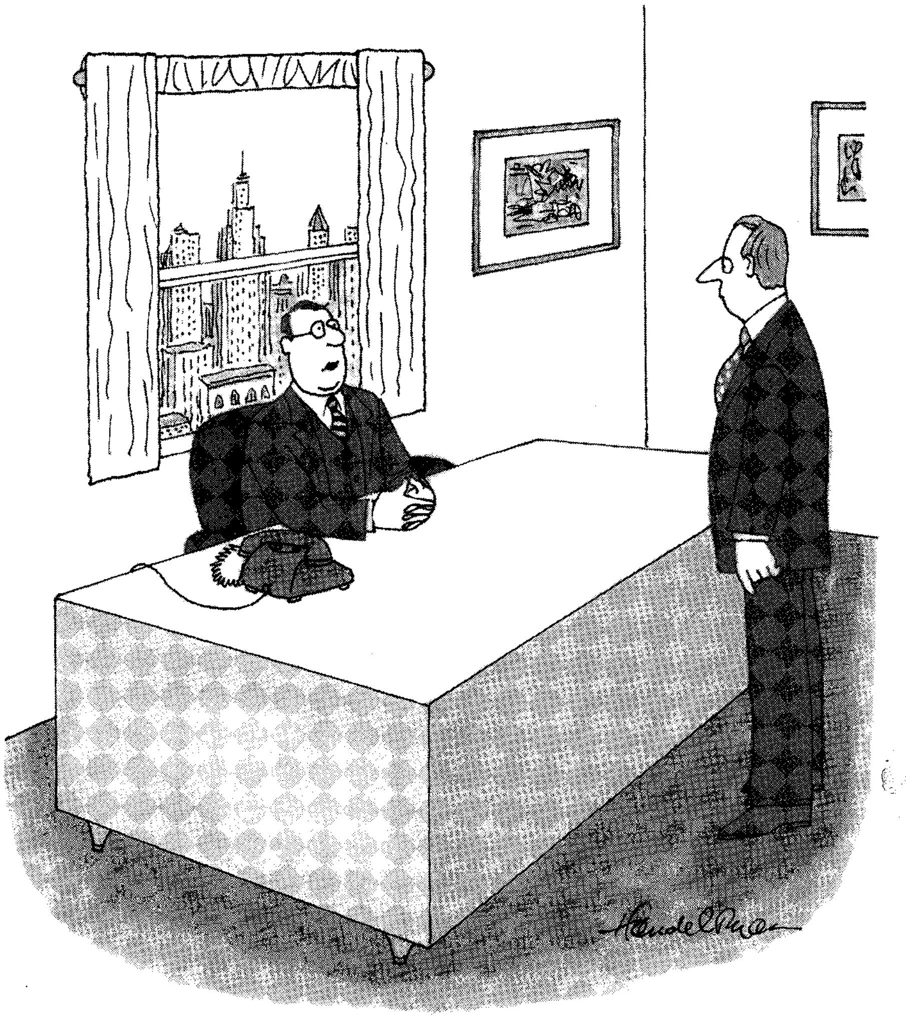
it makes you inspect your own habits as a filmgoer and decide, rightly or wrongly, that they stink. So where are the kicks? Well, they all come from Benoit Poelvoorde, the man with the gun and a great big hole where his remorse should be. Poelvoorde has a whippy, weasel body and a face that refuses to behave—it keeps cracking into grins or pouting with disbelief. If Hollywood ever tries for a remake (which God forbid), the role should be a snug fit for James Woods. He could easily handle the nastiness, though I'm not so sure about the prejudice. Benoit strolls along the street, facing the retreating crew, and pontificates on the errors in the surrounding architecture. He talks elsewhere about the wealth of the elderly and other pockets of income. ("I usually start the month with a postman.") He is openly distrustful of gays, and strips the corpse of a black man to satisfy his curiosity about a sexual rumor. The man is a bigot.

That seems to me the one true inspiration of the movie. Other killers have fortified our belief that evil can be an art. Hannibal Lecter, for example, his perversity nourished by bookishness and snobbery, would not be out of place in the pages of Huysmans. This is a perilous and seductive lie, because it draws the sting from what we know to be vicious in our nature and consigns it to what we would like to think of as aesthetic. There is no such subtle flattery in Benoit: he is a barroom bore, packed with dud opinions and unripe learning. We all know someone like this. He is tiresomely good company, and it frightens us that we are prepared to tolerate him, even find him amusing; we keep needing to pull back and say out loud, "This man is a murderer." He throttles the aged until their teeth slide out; he heaves the dead into a muddy quarry, which starts to dry out in summer, so that the skulls show. He is not just the



"I'm afraid you're a bit too high-minded for us, Rawson. Do you think you could see your way clear to resigning in disgust?"

ordinary man with a weird streak but a man whose crimes seem at one with that ordinariness, and are carried out with appropriate good cheer, as if they were the obvious next step along the road—a career move.

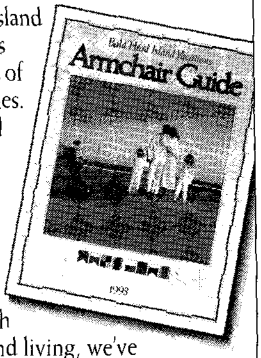
We never learn where Benoit picked up this absorbing hobby—whether he was already in full spate when the filmmakers approached him, or whether they inspired him to start. It's like a parody of corporate sponsorship, except you can't tell who's backing whom; they guarantee Benoit good exposure, and in return he offers a portion of his takings. Charming his way into an old lady's flat, he produces a gun and frightens her to death, having spotted a bottle of pills which hints at a feeble heart. "She's fading fast," he notes with satisfaction, then digs around for her savings and invites the crew to help themselves: "I know you're filming on a shoestring budget." The movie charts the growth of their dependence. To begin with, they just listen patiently as he explains how to ballast a corpse (it depends on the age, and thus the bone density, of the victim); then they grudgingly accept an offer of dinner; and soon they're using their light to track down an errant victim in the dark. They have shuffled across the line that divides scrutiny from collaboration.

This comes to a head when Benoit invades a house and finds a couple making love. What ensues is strong meat by any standard, and Rémy and his crew cannot quell their taste for it. The aftermath is like a battlefield, with flute music dancing lightly over the remains. I wouldn't wish this on any viewer, and until recently the distributor agreed with me. In the print that has been showing in San Francisco, the scene was cut entirely. From now on, though, the full, uncut version will be playing in New York and elsewhere. This is quite proper: distaste—especially one's own—should provide cause for a good quarrel, not an excuse for legislation. And one might argue that the censorship of "Man Bites Dog" could have resulted not in a safer movie but in a more pernicious one.

For what Belvaux, Bonzel, and Poelvoorde have produced, in its calculated scruffiness, is a comedy—as black as a slag heap, maybe, but still a comedy. You laugh at the horrors not from nervous repulsion but because they won't stop: the movie has to do less with the recent spate of serial-killer pics than with older, more decorous tales of slaughter—"Kind Hearts and Coronets," or Chaplin's "Monsieur Verdoux." We find ourselves urging the hero on, into deeds that are ever less heroic, and ever more insulting to the ethics by which we normally choose to live. This is the creepiest, most chastening brand of catharsis: we suddenly learn what it would be like to inflict suffering on others, and it stirs us all the more because we know we never will.

All of which explains why we need that atrocious climax to "Man Bites Dog." It may not be the end of the film, but it feels like a turning point. On both occasions that I saw it, something happened to the audience. Up to then, people were joshing along with the mania, falling into step with Benoit's glee. What he's been doing is bad, but it's not the worst; and now, suddenly, the worst is here. Like the blinding of Gloucester in "King Lear," the scene is one sharp, hissing eruption of all the contempt that has boiled beneath the plot. The comedy stops dead, turned off at the main, and Benoit finds the world collapsing on his head. The audience goes quiet; if you had removed the scene, they would have persisted in relishing the movie to its close.

"Man Bites Dog" is a deeply suspect piece of work, with its foot caught fast in its own satirical trap, but it scratches your vision and nags at your conscience with a tenacity that won't fade. After each showing, I needed a hot bath and a long drink, and felt a strange desire to watch nothing but "Pillow Talk" and "The Glenn Miller Story" for the next fortnight. But the world, sadly, was not devised by Doris Day; nor, thank goodness, is it run by June Allyson, and there should always be a place for movies that choose to break the spell. There would be no reason to see "Man Bites Dog" if it merely rubbed our noses in the dirt. But the dirt isn't a bad place for a witty guided tour, even if it leaves us with the unsettling thought that many of us, in the end, belong there. ♦



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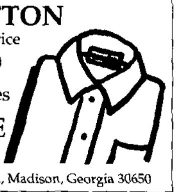

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THE THEATRE

ESCAPE ARTISTS

BY EDITH OLIVER

To burst into tears at a musical just isn't done, but I confess that I did at "Kiss of the Spider Woman," because of the beautiful performance of Brent Carver, as a homosexual window dresser—a hero with drag-queen mannerisms but no I-yam-what-I-yam heroics—and because of the distinguished script, by Terrence McNally. The show is based, of course, on the novel by Manuel Puig, and it tells the story of Molina, the window dresser, who shares a prison cell with a revolutionary named Valentin (Anthony Crivello, in another fine performance). Molina is there for attempting to molest someone in a men's room, and the revolutionary for attempting to overthrow the repressive government of whatever Latin-American country the action takes place in. The prison authorities try to enlist Molina's help in finding out who Valentin's cronies are, to no avail. Valentin has nothing but contempt for Molina, but he is being tortured, and Molina, to cheer and comfort him, tells him stories of films starring an actress who's called Aurora when benign and the Spider Woman when lethal. Enter Chita Rivera, a legendary dancer in mint condition—a dynamo for a legendary role. The action, under Harold Prince's direction, never minimizes the ugliness, yet it somehow remains lively and, thanks to Mr. McNally, often witty or tender. Mr. Crivello makes Valentin's change from rough contempt for Molina to a kind of love extremely moving. There are affecting performances, too, by Merle Louise, as Molina's mother, and by Kirsti Carnahan, as Valentin's girlfriend.

Jerome Sirlin's prison setting is stunning, and Florence Klotz's costumes, notably those brandished by Miss Rivera in Vincent Paterson's dances, are characteristically vivid. The score and lyrics are by John Kander and Fred Ebb, whose credentials are as impeccable as any on Broadway, yet the music was often so overamplified that I missed more than I heard. The triumphs in this instance are those of Mr. Carver, a Canadian actor of classical background making his first appearance on Broadway; of the indefatigable Miss Rivera; of Mr. McNally; and of Mr. Prince, who never loses his magician's touch.

Mustapha Matura's "Playboy of the West Indies," at the Mitzi Newhouse, moves John Millington Synge's "Playboy" from Ireland to sunny Trinidad, and the news is that it survives the transplant in robust health. The action takes place in a rum shop in a small fishing village, which is presided over by Peggy, daughter of Mikey (stand-in for Pegeen Mike of the original), and the Playboy is a young stranger named Ken, who rushes in to announce that he has just dealt his father a deadly blow with a cutlass. The young man becomes a hero in Peg's loving eyes and in the flirtatious eyes of a couple of giggly girls and of a bossy Obeah woman. Peggy's father and his cronies are impressed, too—that is, until Ken's father, no corpse, turns up, his head wrapped in a bloody bandage, to reclaim the reckless, unfilial youth. Whereupon all desert him. Only at the end does Peggy realize that she has missed her one chance for a real man and a real life. Synge's cynicism is just as pungent under Caribbean skies as it ever was in the old country, but the characters make the play, in their delectable patois, and in fine performances under the direction of Gerald Gutierrez.

As the patricide manqué, Victor Love, timid to start with, then slowly gaining stature and dignity and a realization of who he is, is absolutely first rate in a first-rate role, and Lorraine Toussaint's Peggy is the right girl for him. As the Obeah woman, Michele Shay is a bawdy wife of Trinidad if ever there was one. Miss Shay, by the way, is one of several distinguished graduates of the Negro Ensemble Company on the premises, among them Antonio Fargas, as Peggy's father, and Arthur French and Akin Babatunde, as a couple of his fellow-topers. The tropical setting is the work of John Lee Beatty. As for Mr. Matura's script, it does credit to Synge, but it has a poetry all its own. ♦

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BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

VERSE

Serious Concerns
by Wendy Cope
(Faber & Faber; $8.95, paper)

FIRST published in England, where a book of poetry can still make the best-seller lists (this one did), Cope's slender volume will remind readers of the hugely popular Faber collections by an earlier poet. She is probably weary of being called the female Philip Larkin, but most of these verses fall under the same rubric as "They fuck you up, your mum and dad": the form is the rollicking nursery rhyme, but the content is pure adult. And many of them are funny: "If I went vegetarian / And didn't eat lambs for dinner, / I think I'd be a better person / And also thinner." Humor notwithstanding, this is serious poetry, but surely the reason for Cope's popular success is that her instantly memorizable couplets are ideal for extra-poetic uses. They make perfect bitchy aphorisms, and their subjects are universal: "bloody men" and what wretches they are; the pleasure and pain of drinking too much; depression, of both the general and the rarefied writerly variety. An occasional I-can't-help-myself love poem relieves the male-bashing, including one about the author's unrequited desire for A. E. Housman.

Dog Fox Field
by Les Murray
(Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $19)

MURRAY is a deft and pungent chronicler of the rural life of New South Wales—of dairy farms and "beetroot and iron butter"—and a robust and witty connoisseur of the urban malaise, of "wideawake cities / with tower flats and smog horizon." Possessing a narrative ease and also a lyric or didactic brio, he is as much at home in an epithalamium as he is in a historical meditation, and he travels with assurance through a variety of metrical schemes. Murray's irrepressible energy and, at times, sheer loquaciousness, to say nothing of his idiosyncratic mixture of crustiness and geniality, manliness and rapture, might seem to prohibit, ultimately, the deepest concision and impact. Nevertheless, he is by far the best Australian poet since A. D. Hope, and one of the most accomplished poets now writing anywhere in English.

Andalusian Poems
Translated by Christopher Middleton
and Leticia Garza-Falcón
(Godine; $30)

FIVE hundred years before Shakespeare turned the clichés of love poetry—the beloved's red-as-wine lips and perfumed breath—inside out, the poets of Andalusia beat him to it. When the English "tradition" was in its infancy, the poets whose work Christopher Middleton and Leticia Garza-Falcón have translated from Spanish versions of the Arabic were practicing elaborate variations on complex forms: shaped poems, satires, elegies on places, friends, and lovers. Like the best poets of any century, many of them were not professional versifiers; they had lives. They were diplomats, civil servants, warriors, women. Two were kings. One was decapitated, one crucified. The imagery here is astonishingly, vividly physical: "Is there no way I might / Open my heart with a knife / I could slip you in / And close the cut again." In the final section, of *muwashshahat*—odes praising a lover, with a final stanza quoting a woman, often the lover herself—there are moments of awe-inspiring eroticism. This book, beautifully printed and bound, may be for the twentieth century what "The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám" was for the nineteenth: an eye opening on a world of which the West was wholly ignorant. Without knowing either Spanish or Arabic, the reader still knows that these translations are something of a miracle. ♦

PENELOPE GILLIATT

PENELOPE GILLIATT, who died last week, in her native England, at the age of sixty-one, burst upon this country and this magazine in the late sixties as brilliance personified. With her flaming-red hair, her dazzling wit, and her fierce intelligence, she lit up every room she walked into, and she lit up the page as well. From 1967 to 1979, she was *The New Yorker's* weekly film critic (alternating in half-yearly stints with Pauline Kael), and during that time, and almost to the end of her life, she also wrote stories, Profiles, and book reviews. There were some weeks when her byline appeared twice in a single issue, and when her name wasn't in *The New Yorker* it was in bookstores (she wrote five novels) and in movie theatres. Her screenplay for the 1971 film "Sunday Bloody Sunday" remains a classic—the kind of movie that Mozart or Laurence Sterne might have written.

When you burn so brightly, it's hard to keep the flame going, and Penelope fought against middle age. She watched, unhappily, as movies coarsened and lost their magic. She saw many of her friends and idols—Jean Renoir, Samuel Beckett, Kenneth Tynan—succumb to sickness and death. She was often lonely and was sometimes self-destructive. But even on her bleakest days she didn't lose her sparkling sense of humor, and she continued to write: an opera libretto, dozens more stories, and her last book, "To Wit," an essay on the theory and practice of comedy.

Along with her brilliance, Penelope had a prodigious appetite for work. She hated holidays—especially Thanksgiving, which she regarded as a poor excuse for a day off in the middle of the week—and she was in her office late into the night and on weekends. Those few of us who made it in to work on the morning of July 14, 1977, when parts of New York were still blacked out, remember how, at a little after ten, Penelope—wearing white pumps and a filmy white sundress, her hair in a perfect French twist—turned up, having lugged a manual typewriter up seventeen flights of unlit stairs. She wanted to know if anything still needed to be written. ♦

SHOUTS AND MURMURS

STUCK IN TREES

BY IAN FRAZIER

THIS is the season of plastic bags stuck in trees. Stray shopping bags—many of them white, with handles, perhaps from a deli or a fruit-and-vegetable store originally—roll along the streets, fill with air, levitate like disembodied undershirts, fly, snag by their handles in the branches. Trees wave them in the breeze. They luff and whirr like spinnakers and twist into knots. Daniel, a guy who works at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, was removing a plastic bag from a Japanese flowering cherry tree at the Eastern Parkway entrance with a leaf rake as I walked by. He held the rake above him at arm's length and snatched at the bag with the tines. It took him a while; finally, he pulled the bag down and squashed it into a ball in his hand. I asked if I could see it. Its blue logo read, "MARTIN PAINT . . . 'It Ain't Just Paint.' "

I walked around Brooklyn looking at plastic bags stuck in trees. I got a sore neck from craning up. I saw yellow Tower Records bags, tan bags, red bags, like the kind you get in Chinatown, Key Food bags, C-Town bags. Last season's bags have shredded into a sort of plastic Spanish moss. Big black trash bags become involved in branches in a sprawling and complicated way. Over time, light-colored bags darken and dark ones fade until all are a variety of gray. There is a lot of other stuff in trees, too. Second most common, apparently, is audiocassette tape. It wraps around branches and glistens. Next come balloons, both rubber and silvery-plastic. Next come promotional pennants, the kind used-car lots fly. I also saw:

a catalogue from a discount office-supply store in a cypress on Washington Avenue;

a jacket with a quilted orange lining, a shredded T-shirt, some string, a wad of newspaper, and a red plastic plant hanger in a pin oak at Sixteenth and Prospect Park West;

a white baby bunting with a blue-and-pink design and a drawstring at the bottom hem in a tree on Prospect Park West;

a white sash, perhaps from a jujitsu uniform, in a tree on McDonald Avenue (there's a jujitsu place just up the street);

a small black folded umbrella in a tree at Fort Hamilton Parkway and Fifty-sixth Street;

an old tire tied to a tree by a blue fitted sheet printed with Disney characters at the corner of Sixty-first Street;

a whitewall bicycle tire in a maple at Seventy-first Street;

a piece of angle iron, possibly from a bed frame, in an ailanthus by the highway bridge at Seventy-ninth and Seventh;

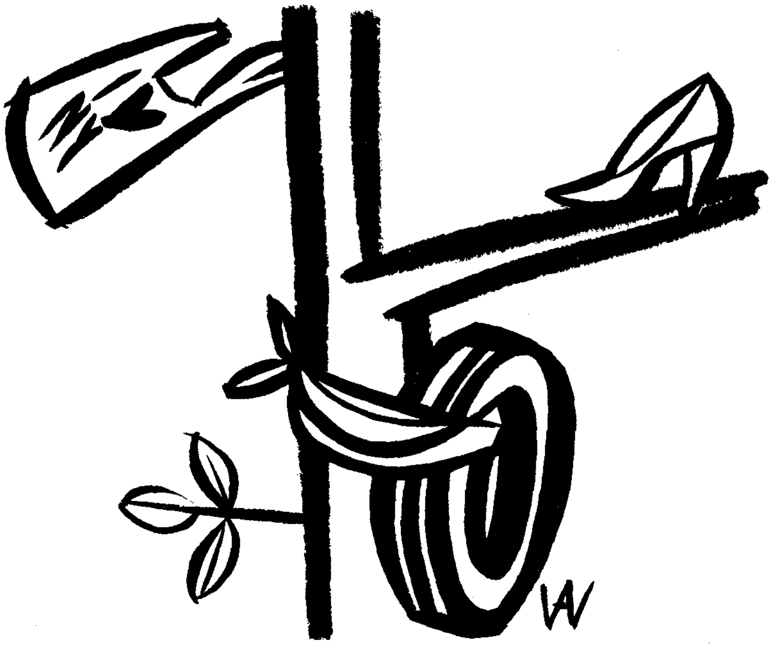
a pair of white Nike high-top sneakers and a pair of high-tops with no visible brand hanging by the laces from a tree at Fifty-ninth Street;

thirty-eight pairs of sneakers and other footwear (motorcycle boots, work boots), a pair of dark-red boxing gloves, and a little red-devil doll hanging in a tree at Forty-fifth and Fifth;

sneakers, toy guns, Teddy bears, and a pair of women's white high-heeled shoes in a big London plane tree on Fifth between Forty-third and Forty-second;

a stuffed toy bunny, more women's shoes, more sneakers, a ball of kite string, and a dish drainer in a London plane tree next to that;

in a maple above the Prospect Expressway, an unidentifiable wad of leaves and cotton or wool—possibly a nest. ♦



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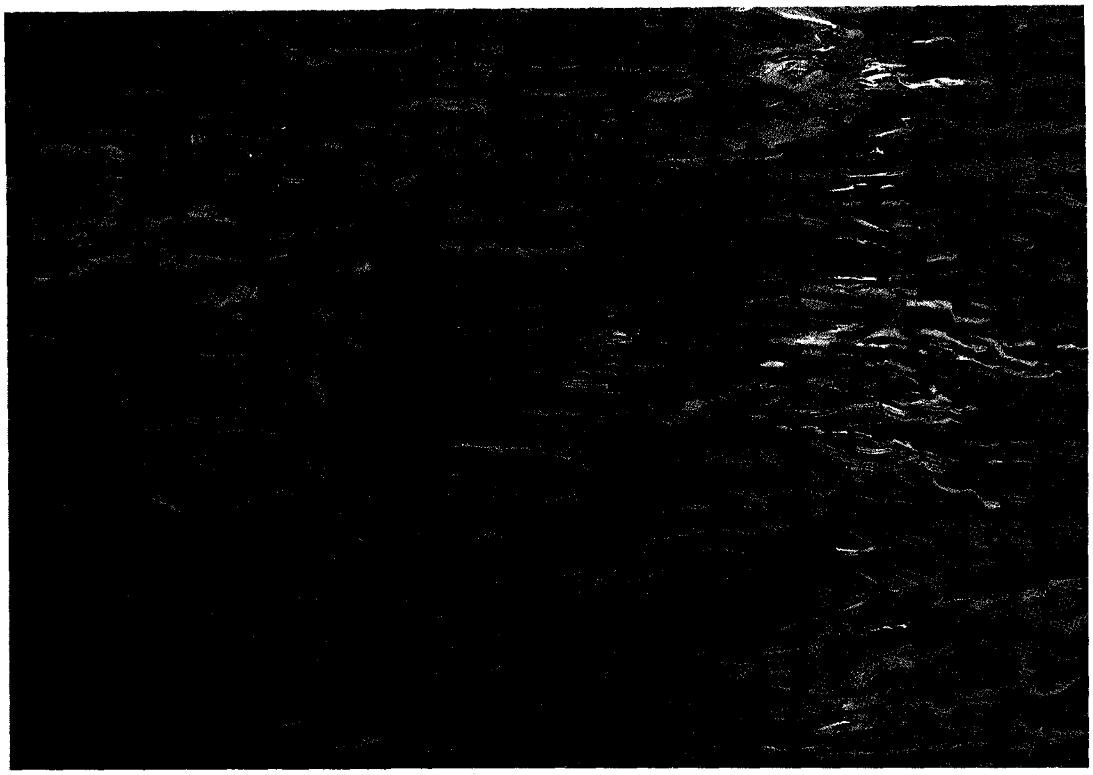

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